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Transfiguration of Christ

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF JESUS

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THE TRANSFIGURATION OF JESUS

BY

ARCHIBALD ALLAN

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PREFACE

THE contents of this book form part of a scheme of thought which the writer has tried to maintain through two previously published volumes, and which has for its ultimate purpose the interpretation of the Consciousness of Jesus, as we find it in the Four Gospels of the New Testament. "He taught them as having AUTHORITY." What and whence was this "authority"? He Himself, in His general teaching, set it forth before the world in the name "FATHER," as, in its widest sense, primarily related to all natural and generating Life, and as commanding "heaven and earth"; and again, and more specifically, under the term "SPIRIT," as of Power which surpassed all bounds of the relationary and sensible, absolutely.

But, as all know, He affirmed Himself to be identical in Being with such "FATHER" and such "SPIRIT," and this clearly rested solely upon His own consciousness of Himself, and on such consciousness as absolutely true in its authority. And it is the view of the writer that just because He alone of all teachers of mankind stood upon this authority, "never man so spake." Therefore, *The Advent of the Father* (Maclehose, Glasgow, 1907) treats of His consciousness of the one, the "FATHER," and *Space and Personality* (Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh, 1913), of His consciousness of

the other, the "SPIRIT": the former work being theological in its character, and the latter psychological and philosophical.

The present book, on the same foundations, ventures upon the reason why the so-called "Miraculous," of which Christ's Transfiguration is assumed to be a representative case, was to Himself wholly *natural*, in the light of the same consciousness of WHO HE HIMSELF was, and why it ought to be as rationally natural to us also. But as He accepts all men to occupy, with Himself, the same plane of Being, in their age-long ascending to His "FATHER" and their "FATHER," and to His "GOD" and their "GOD,"—an ascent which is clearly maintained under the power of such consciousness—this leads up to the conviction that Human Consciousness, as best typified and exemplified in His, is, in reality, Highest Nature, and as that which asserts the absolute truth of Being far more directly and indisputably than all the "Revelations" of the Past, or all the "Laws" of the Cosmos. And this means that there is in Man a permanently revealing consciousness of an infinitely fuller content of Truth than he has yet realised through his religions, philosophies, and sciences, and that this consciousness, which is as profound in all men as in Jesus, gives always to every one the only absolute and infallible guide into all Truth.

ARCHIBALD ALLAN.

THE MANSE OF CHANNELKIRK,
OXTON, BERWICKSHIRE, SCOTLAND,
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PART I

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE TRANSFIGURATION

(Matt. xvii. 1-8 ; Mark ix. 2-8 ; Luke ix. 28-36)

CHAPTER I

1. The Historical Twilight of the Transfiguration.

WHEN Peter confessed that Jesus was "the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus charged the disciples "that they should tell no man that He was the Christ" (Matt. xvi. 20). In a similar way, on coming down from the Mount of Transfiguration, He "commanded them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of Man be risen from the dead" (Matt. xvii. 9).

This silence, so firmly imposed, was strictly kept. "They kept the saying," we are assured. But it is somewhat marvellous that even after the resurrection, the Apostles should seem never to have referred to it in the propagation of the Christian religion. Matthew, Mark, and Luke assert its historical reality, but it is never again alluded to, not even by Peter, or John, or Paul. The mention of it in 2 Peter i. 17-18 is, of course, non-apostolic; although it gives evidence that a certain general knowledge of it pervaded the universal Church after apostolic times.

With the exception of Tertullian, who rebuts Marcion's derisive comments on it, none of the ante-Nicene writers (*i.e.*, before 325 A.D.) seems to have noticed it. The Transfiguration has always

stood in the twilight of the Christian revelation. The Church has never insisted on the confession, "I believe in the Transfiguration," although she has compelled such an avowal in the Virgin birth, the suffering, crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus; in the Holy Catholic Church, communion of saints, forgiveness of sins, etc., etc. The Apostolic, Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds—these three great pillars which have sustained the dogmatic bridge over which Christian generations have travelled from time to eternity for nigh two thousand years—have not the slightest hint of it. From the transfiguration of her Lord, the Church appears to have drawn little inspiration or light; no element of guidance either for faith or practice; no code of sympathy or comfort; no assurance of hope; no articulation of wise intuition for the future.

Apart from some sermons (Bishop Hall's for example), commentaries, and "Lives of Christ," no great Christian author gives it adequate treatment. In modern times, Archbishop Trench's exposition of it in his *Studies in the Gospels*, is perhaps the most conspicuous. German students seem to have found more pleasure in its contemplation, although Harnack, in his *History of Dogma*, leaves it quite aside, doubtless for the reason that he could not find it to have been made the basis of any of the dogmatic statements of Christendom. Does it mean that there is an unexpressed consciousness in the Church that she has not yet declared the Resurrection doctrine with sufficient success to warrant her to follow on, as the

Master commanded, with the promulgation of the Transfiguration? Certainly, it is still left outside of the circle of those sacred beliefs which she deems essential to maintain before the world. Consequently, Confessions and Catechisms innumerable leave it without a voice.

And strange to say, the devotional as well as the didactic literature of the Church is just as devoid of it. Dean Stanley's "Hymn" apart, we have few references to it. For instance, the Litany of the Anglican Prayer-Book invokes God by the Incarnation, the Nativity, the Circumcision, the Baptism, the Fasting, the Temptation, the Cross, the Death, the Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus, but never by His Transfiguration. Few hymns, also, or verse-forms of divine praise, make its magnificence, wonder, and mystery, their burden. *Hymns, Ancient and Modern*, used so widely in our Empire, has only two hymns in it based upon the Transfiguration, with the merest allusion to it in two others. The *Scottish Hymnal*, and the *Church Hymnary*, each dismiss it with one and the same hymn, the former containing a line or two about it in another hymn. In the Psalms, we do not expect to find anything about Jesus, but we are disappointed that the Transfiguration is also a blank in the Paraphrases. Therefore, being such a ghostly thing in these instruments of the national praise service, it is not surprising that it is practically shut out of the devotional soul of the Christianity of the Empire. The writer has never heard it referred to, in either prayer or praise, inside or outside of a church.

Has anyone read a *book* specially devoted to the exposition of the Transfiguration, similar to books which treat of Christ's Birth, His Crucifixion, His Death, His Resurrection, etc., etc.? We confess to being surprised that our religious poets should abstain from such a subject, and one which, *prima facie*, we should naturally expect to draw the passion of the divine Muse. Yet such a writer as Keble, for example, is discouraging in this respect. In his *Christian Year*, he has, I think, 109 poems. Each hymn-poem deals with some notable Sunday or Holy Day, commemorative of conspicuous saints and events connected with the Christian religion. He expatiates fully on the Advent, Christmas, the Circumcision, the Epiphany, Good Friday, the Cross, Easter, etc., the Sundays in Lent, the Sundays before and after Easter, Trinity Sunday, and the Sundays after Trinity, the "Days" of all the Apostles and Evangelists, Baptism, Communion, Confirmation, Churching of Women, and such "Days" as that of the Gunpowder Treason, "King Charles the Martyr," and "The Restoration of the Royal Family," but not a word about the Transfiguration of his Lord; his whole work being destitute of any reference to it, save four lines in St James's Day. The same indifference to that marvellous scene is shown by the devout poetess, Christina Rossetti. In all her poems she never mentions it. But in such a work as Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, one might hope to find it alluring to an imaginative mind like his. Yet it is absent in both parts of his immortal dream. Even Dante

in his *Commedia* gives it but a line or two. Newman's *Dream of Gerontius* is likewise destitute of it. From which we may infer that there is an accepted form of piety in Christendom which, though zealous and deep, does not include the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ as an object of its spiritual interests.

2. The Christ of Sorrow preferred to the Christ of Glory.

It may also be that the human heart is more sympathetically touched by His sufferings than by His triumphs and exaltations. We are thrilled by His trials and contentions with evil, but are not so enthusiastic over His rising from the grave, His being clothed in transfiguring light, and His ascension to the right hand of God. We are moved to love in the one case, and to admiration only in the other. For the human soul has the two paths for adoption, viz., to go down with Him into the ever-deepening gloom of the Valley of Sorrow which begins from His birth among the beasts, darkens in His temptation, and culminates in the horrors of His crucifixion; or to ascend with Him to the Father-God in His Resurrection, Transfiguration, and Ascension. But, as a rule, Christian piety refuses to pass His cross, and take the upward way. The human wounds of our gods endear them more to us than all their golden crowns and divine honours. And perhaps while we ourselves sojourn in the arena of births, temptations, and crucifixions, adoration through tears may be more befitting us

than the triumphant pæans which belong to the other side of death.

3. Resurrection as Anteceding Transfiguration in Spiritual History.

And this again leads us to note with some surprise that, in the order of His spiritual history, Christ places the Transfiguration, not *before*, but *after*, death and the resurrection. For just as John the Baptist, in his order of spiritual values, and speaking with the voice of Inner History, spoke of Jesus as anteceding him in Time (John i. 15), and just as Jesus Himself viewed Himself as historically precedent of Abraham (John viii. 58), so Christ implies His Resurrection as anteceding His Transfiguration. He gave strict command to His three Apostles to place, in their spiritual order, the historical declaration of His Resurrection before His Transfiguration. And this course appears to be necessary for the full harmony of the great pre-cosmic and post-cosmic conception of the order of His personal revelation, as given us in the accounts of the Evangelists. For, in the vision of His own being, Time does not determine, or regulate, His abiding in Time, or His withdrawal from it; does not pertain to the order of days and years. As He appears to Himself, He is "before the world was"; He is before Abraham's "day"; and when heaven and earth pass away, He Himself is not within the sweep of that mighty change. He is not clothed in the robes of ordinary Cosmic History. His is the timeless order of "I Am"

being. Indeed, His deepest experience is as if He were *before* creation, and simply pure space. He sought no support from history, as we understand that word. Past time held no light for Him. "The measure of the Fathers" was solely the measure of the fulness of sepulchres, and blood which had been shed upon the earth since the days of Abel (Matt. xxiii. 32-35).

4. Christ's "I Am" Consciousness Dominates His Whole Existence.

Therefore, we can discern a deeper harmony in the sequence which He prefers, viz., Birth, Temptation, Crucifixion, Resurrection, Transfiguration, and Ascension, than when Transfiguration is placed before His Crucifixion. For Birth, Temptation, and Crucifixion are wholly within the ambit of bodily concerns, but Resurrection, Transfiguration and Ascension, although of the body, yet seem altogether to surpass it. There is a true crescendo of the lifting up of His Body out of earth and time, in the order Resurrection, Transfiguration, and Ascension, which suffers rupture in placing the Transfiguration before Crucifixion and Resurrection. For, as we have said, the view of Himself as held by Jesus, is one which exalts Him finally above all temporal sequences, or that *history* which is knowledge of sequences based in time, and concomitant with mortal bodies. The whole course of His existence, as it appears to Himself, and as it ought in its truth to appear to us, begins with the Unbeginning and ends with the Unending,

His indefinable "I Am" constituting a perpetual and concurrent, as well as the supreme, consciousness of Himself throughout. Thus the great Wheel of Life, for Him as for us, dips for a brief space into the river of Time, effecting the ford by immersion and emersion, or by what we name Birth and Death, while rolling on its ceaseless way. The mind of Jesus has no time limits. For our "Time" He substitutes "the Will of the Father," wherein is no time. In Birth, Temptation, and Crucifixion, He descends deeper and deeper into the mysteries of our bodily possibilities, and in His Resurrection, Transfiguration, and Ascension He rises higher and higher into the wonders of its divinity. In the Resurrection we see the higher *Life*, in the Transfiguration the higher Life become *Light*, and in the Ascension the higher *Being* which involves and transcends both. And this order of the soul, in these three great presentations of it, He embodies in His words, "I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God." This is Resurrection, Transfiguration, and Ascension as Whole-Fact.

In short, as the vast Universe has an order of existence within which the Solar System moves as a regulated fragment, so History, as man has reckoned it by days and years, is only true within a vaster Record, viz., the Sequence of the unfolding of Truth in the mind and consciousness of Man; the revelation of "the Word," which sums for him all that he knows of Creation and himself in his perpetual ascent to, or realisation of, *Absolute Being*.

This order of the soul moves under other than solar influences. The "days" of common history have often shown a cessation and even a retrogression from such revelation of Reality or Truth, in which, clearly, Life *precedes* Light, and, therefore, also the Resurrection and the Transfiguration. But none of such "days" could be regarded by Jesus as "one of the days of the Son of Man," a day such as Abraham saw and rejoiced, or a day which Jesus lamented that Jerusalem had not seen, although seeing all the days of her earthly history (Luke xix. 42).

5. Christ Incandescent in Light Native to Himself.

The words "transfiguration" and "metamorphosis" are employed to define Christ's glorifying on the Mount, but there is very slender evidence to warrant them in the three gospel narratives. The actual *form* of Jesus was not altered. He was only beheld as the centre of light as bright as that of the sun. There was no change in His human shape or nature. He became incandescent, but not truly transfigured. He glowed. He shone by His *own* light, radiating from no other source than His own personality; and it is in harmony with all we know of His character that only in the light of Himself can we see Himself, and also Moses and Elijah, the Apostles, and the Cloud which envelops them. He seemed to add something to Universal Nature. But, really, this is the native light in all of us which we call *consciousness*,

and through which the Inconceivable and Unseen becomes revealed to *conception* through faith and eye, and in whose illumination all discoveries are made.

And we are to understand that when the vision is past and the darkness of night covers all Nature as before, it is because this mysterious light has withdrawn within Himself once more. And although such an ineffable spectacle is not to be explained by our modern knowledge of prismatic light, yet from the higher plane of the world's consciousness, it can be affirmed that, not only in Christ but in every man, there dwells such illuminating power of self-revealing as has unfolded all the knowledge which we now possess concerning the present, the past, and the future. The *circle* of such knowledge is the limit of all we understand concerning both the things of this world and of the world that is to come, and it is all light that has come forth from the individual persons of men. In all probability, after death, we shall all shine or glow as Christ did. The angels in Christ's tomb seem to have appeared by this light to the disciples.

6. The "I Am" Light in all Men.

Man has always been man's greatest light. Athough light is latent in all things, yet, for man, the self-transfiguring light *in* man is the most essential. Hence, in periods of twilight and even acknowledged darkness, men instinctively expect their illumination to come out of man. This universal expectancy, unspoken and unspeakable, Jesus answered by His

Word, "*I* am the Light of the world." His transfiguration was in its nature in full accord with His unique consciousness, and was perhaps the fullest expression, on the physical side of human nature, of the marvellous light that lies in man. Perhaps, also, we should not limit it to the purely physical side of things, for any day we may have to accept the fact that *all Light, physical, mental, and spiritual, is one.* Certainly, such a statement as "I am the Light of the world," seems to cover and unify that whole sphere of light which, in our systems of thought, we usually and arbitrarily divide into spiritual, mental, and physical.

It is true that, under the tyranny of such postulated divisions, we too meekly bow to the so-called scientific dicta that the light of fact is different from the light of reason, and the light of reason different from the light of faith. In the same easy way we admit that the truth of fact ("brute fact" as it is ungraciously styled) is greater truth than the truth of reason, and the truth of reason greater than the truth of faith. But the assumed finality of the truth of "brute fact" is being sadly belied in our day, *and it will always remain that the most absolute truth we know is the truth of our own personal being, the invulnerable "I am" light of truth.* And it is the light of pure consciousness. We do not obtain it through either reason or scientific "brute fact." It is truth which both reason and individuated facts must postulate before they can move a step; and it is only comparable to universal space, which must be postulated before sun, moon, and stars can exist or know their

several paths. It is Truth that shines by its own light, and it is Truth which transfigures by its light all that comes within its radiance, Nature, reason, and all the "brute facts" there are. But for this "I am" light, all these would be in darkness unimaginable.

Science, as it has been said, takes things neither by the beginning nor by the end. Her divisions of *life* into human life, animal life, insect life, and plant life, etc., have all been blotted out by the truth that all *Life is one.* And scientific "light" is likely to follow the same course. The light which strikes the eye, scientifically described as vibration or pulse, will yet be accepted as thrilling also both mind and spirit. Why is the same pulse which is both darkness and light, darkness between sun and eye, and only light in the eye, to be regarded as finally stopped in the eye? We rather think that just as all that we call matter passes downwards until it is scientific "space" or "void," so the same unmiddled way will be taken till it is ultimately transfigured in absolute "spirit."

7. The Absolute Light from which Nothing can be Hidden.

Consequently, in interpreting Jesus, we must try to realise that we have to deal with *completed* being, not sectional being; and that in His presence we get that light which includes and illumines all the being we are, body, mind, and soul. His transfiguration can only be explained on this high ground. He Himself always assumes it.

Therefore, as He claimed to be the *fulness* of all

light to man, a claim which history increasingly sustains, we should expect that *in whatever manner light is known to man*, it would find its best illustration or revelation in Jesus. He did not leave aside the body of man, or "Nature," in His doctrine. And being the world's highest and most perfect type of man, we should expect that His experiences in His Body would be as marvellous as those which all men confess to be in His "Mind" and "Spirit." In this respect He becomes, in what He was, and in all He was, as fundamental for Physics as for Philosophy and Religion. We try to make this clearer below.

It certainly cannot be disputed that this personal radiation of light from Jesus on the Mount, as self-declaratory and self-characterising, invariably finds its reflex on the mental plane of things in the world's great men of light and genius. But He proved more conclusively than they, that *supreme truth never needs proving*. He repeated every man's conviction when He declared, "Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true," for when we doubt everything we cannot doubt ourselves. "I am" is a truth of consciousness which stands above all discussion, and the man of genius witnesses to its absoluteness the more he defines it by himself. The great poet, *e.g.*, is incandescent to the world in his poetry. He is transfigured in light which bears witness of himself, and the more fully he witnesses from his "I am" consciousness, the more fully will the world realise the light in which there is *no* darkness, *i.e.*, creating no shadow.

It is, indeed, more than hinted in the Transfigura-

tion scene, that the dead, such as Moses and Elijah, have their common existence in the light in which Christ revealed Himself and them. Christ, Moses, and Elijah, Peter, James, and John, saw each other truly in the same space and in the same light of their common vision. The light in the eye was taken up into "the light that never was on sea or land," and both, in turn, were outshone in the purer light in which we see "God," the light of the heart, or the personal "I am." The light has no limits, but only the organs of our seeing. And although the light of the eye darkens in blindness, and the light of the mind in death, the personal "I am" light, native in what we are, cannot know darkness. And this light it is, shining for ever beyond all forms of darkness, that reveals through the ages, not only the living to the dead, but the dead to the living.

This personal glow is not, indeed, to be considered as alien from any one of us. It always falls within our human experience, although faint and fitful. Dark would be all things to us without it—eternally dark. But we are all conscious of light ever glowing within us, just as we are conscious of the illumination which has been cast over the history of the world by the light which shines out of the personality of Jesus Christ. No doubt, our bodies do not glow in the astonishing manner beheld by the Apostles, but the incandescence of bodily forms is not unknown to the lower spheres of natural phenomena, and consequently cannot be regarded as impossible to the body of a human being.

It is evident enough in certain kinds of both plants

and animals. We have luminous fungi and bacteria, glowing worms in the sea and on the land, and among insects there are light-giving beetles and bugs, and fire-flies. Therefore, even if the personal light from His body were confined to His individual case, it could not at least be regarded as unnatural, or an occurrence which had no parallel in Nature.

It is true, the glow from His body we have not seen, but no discovery ever made by the mind of man attains to its fulness of glory, independent of the light which streams from His person. It is never wholly understood until seen in His vision.

And it is this light which guarantees the absolute truth that "There is *nothing* hid, save that it should be manifested, neither *anything secret* but that it should come to light" (Mark iv. 22).

If there is anything yet dark to men, it is not due to the nature of the Universe, but to man's own limitations of understanding through eye, mind, and soul. And the fulness or illimitability of all or any kind of light, which reveals, is shown by its always dispelling a further darkness than comes within the circle of its shining. The light that fell upon the eyes of Christ's Apostles still shines through them upon the darkness of the world, in a process of continuous transfiguration.

8. The Transfiguration a Similitude of the Course of Time.

Indeed, the bare panoramic appearance of it, even as a mere spectacle, is fitted to fire the wrapt soul of a man to highest forms of thought and

passion. Was it here that Dante obtained the hint of his great imaginative *Commedia?* It seems to condense, in glowing similitude, the upward ascent of Man from the demonic darkness of the bestial and savage epochs of his experience to his intellectual and spiritual light and life, as we now behold them. The surrounding gloom of Night enveloping the mountain, high and hard of ascent, and the feeble company swallowed up in such solitude, might, to a fervent fancy, typify man's early condition of his pristine, semi-conscious animality, and that overpowering disproportion between his mortality and the vast presence of Nature. The ascent of the mountain itself might symbolise the long and prolonged upward struggle of enlightened and enlightening civilisation, through its scientific, philosophical, and religious progress. Moreover, the promptings of Prayer, which incited the ascent, have always characterised man's search for still loftier ideals of a more perfect existence. The mountain ascent, too, as leading up beyond the human and mere material, to the spiritual and heavenly, and as passing above the mortal utterances to the responses of the celestial voices, only portrays the deep heartfelt desire which has never been absent from the imagination of mankind from the dawn of time. In this way the Transfiguration of Jesus, even in some of its material aspects, might suggest much which has taken the long history of Man to accomplish, not the least perhaps being the uses of Jesus Himself as involved in such a vast progress, and as thenceforward indicated to be the chief force in dispelling all the

darkness usually ascribed to human futurity, and in realising the inseparable communion of that Being which man divides into Time and Eternity.

It is certainly indicative of a great consciousness, pervading both man and nature, which has received but scant recognition from the human mind. We recommend sincere attention to it from those who, *e.g.*, think the Gospel of St John out of focus with the Synoptists, and regard the latter as based in a deeper foundation of fact than the former. There are, doubtless, mountain peaks in the Synoptists which rise to the same levels of the consciousness which pervades and dominates the Fourth Gospel, and the Transfiguration is one of them. Yet the Synoptists seem but the broad mass of mountain historicity on which the Fourth Gospel glows as *their* transfiguration. The human consciousness passes from the common planes of the ordinary historical lives of mortal man upwards through the Synoptic chiaroscura of the Human-Divine, to the open limitless bright vision of St John, in which all form of either "human" and "divine" is lost in pure Being. But throughout all, the same voice is never lost, "This is My beloved Son."

Therefore, the Transfiguration (we retain the customary word) was not merely spectacular, that all men should marvel, but an integral epitome of the order of our being, and typical of its ever-upward course in the unfolding of the vast centuries of Time. Science has partially seen this truth, following the path of generation, and has named it "Evolution." But the term is a limited one, and refers to *Energy*

active. Transfiguration, on the other hand, connotes in itself Life, as well as Light, and at the same time, gives the true reference to an "I am" consciousness for that *freedom* which is essential to all motional activity. But they are the same energy although differently apprehended. Evolution we associate with cosmical physics; Transfiguration with the Cosmos spiritually "glorified." Transfiguration includes Evolution and transcends it as its "Over-Soul." Transfiguration is the fuller and higher aspect of the same fact, viewed from the loftier altitudes of our higher Life and Light.

We endeavour to show below that Transfiguration, as well as Evolution, spring from deeper-seated power than Science has ever acknowledged to exist.

9. Transfiguration and the Inner Consciousness of Man.

We have corroboration of this fact (1) in the belief and consciousness of men, regarding an inner invisible existence which it is beyond the power of any other light than the light of the spirit of man to reveal; (2) in the conviction that such light can become glowing even in and to the eye of the body; and (3) in the universal desire of men to behold this inner realm with open face and soul.

This deep crave in the world-heart called for satisfaction. The great thinkers of the past felt this need, and invented all manner of speculative, philosophic, and poetic systems in order to meet it. But being founded on no rock of truth equal in profundity to the soul's desire, it was laid at the

door of Christ, if He would be Saviour of the World, to deliver the world from such falsehoods. And Christ has done this solely on the foundation truth of His own personality. This has its sympathetic response in the testimony of an inner visible realm which every man is conscious of as lying within himself, and which is only revealed to himself by its own kindred light, or light that springs from itself, and so transfigures him to himself as well as to others. All men believe in a "Beyond," an "Eternity," because they carry it within themselves. There is an uncreated consciousness of being within us which is ever beyond all thinking, willing, and desiring, as we usually understand these concepts. And just because of this surest of all facts, all other testimony from such sources as ghosts, apparitions, professedly dead people, poetic dreams, and philosophical systems, is rendered superfluous. Christ shows it to be our own individual *natural* heritage.

Moreover, in the Transfiguration we have a true and full type of the world-old modes by which God-Being has become veritable to the spirit of mankind. The *Cloud* represents that apprehension of God-Being in *sensible* things, which those on a higher plane of knowledge have always condemned as Idolatry, or worship of what is seen, heard, felt, smelt, and tasted, although there is nothing to condemn in it, if man has no higher medium of communion with the Unseen. The *Voice* that was heard from the Cloud represents all that Intelligence and Reason in the souls of seers, poets, philosophers, and theologians have grasped of the *Magnum*

Mysterium; and the *Glow of Light* in the Cloud represents that illumination which comes inseparably with everything caught in the senses—in Thought and Reason—and at the same time yields up a conviction of Being which lies higher than they. It is a plain hint to man that "soul" is not wholly confined to his body. We call it Inspiration, but in reality it is Spirit-in-Glow, or more truly, as we hope to show, Space-in-Glow, and for which our usual name is *Consciousness*. It passes beyond both Light and Darkness, as relativities, just as Space does, and has no quality by which we can designate it. It is therefore absolutely formless, invisible, timeless, and changeless; or less of everything capable of being characterised. And it is in such space-in-glow that man can venture to speak of his "spirit," his "God," and the Absolute or Ultimate Being, as *same* Being.

He cannot indeed do otherwise, because he is absolutely destitute of any means by which he can *conceive* these as divided. Before he can do so, he has to drag them back into the lower spheres of Thought and Reason, and the senses generally. In short, he has to bring them down from the mount of their transfiguration, to mingle among common light and darkness, and the living and dying masses of common flesh and blood.

This destitution of all conceptions, and the necessity to rely solely upon our consciousness for the deepest truth of the historical facts concerning Jesus, has never been quite realised by Christendom. Faith in Jesus has constantly vacillated between the

purely arbitrary concepts, "spirit" and "flesh," "law" and "gospel," "heavenly" and "earthly," "temporal" and "eternal," and many others which, at bottom, rest solely upon arbitrary human judgments. Our consciousness, in its profoundest testimony, unceasingly protests against such relativities as ultimately and abidingly true. There is common ground, for example, in the Transfiguration for "mortal" and "immortal," "earthly" and "heavenly," "time-past" and "time-present," "divine" and "human," and such like, which is essential to its reception into our faith as Truth, but which ground is purely a consciousness to us, has no concept of expression, and completely wipes out all such relativities as finally untrue.

For example, we build our faith upon conceptions of Spirit made Flesh; Spirit become flesh in a human body; Spirit descending as a dove upon body and abiding there; and again of dead body rising out of gross earthy graves and being seen as body by mortals, and shining "heavenly" bodies being seen by womanly eyes as sitting in such a grave, yet have no rational concept in which we can express such faith. It stands only upon our inner consciousness of a wider existence than heaven and earth provide to Knowledge, a consciousness which also affords that capacity for the possibility of such happenings independent of needing any concept, as a rational organon.

The same thing falls to be said of the Appearances in the Upper Room when doors were shut; to men going to Emmaus; and to Paul on his way

to Damascus. No division exists between the "spiritual" and the "material."

Moreover, many of Jesus' statements in His teaching imply the same basis in consciousness alone for our acceptance of them as possibly coming facts of Truth: "The Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father," "They shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of Heaven, with power and great glory," as likewise the prediction of the Great Judgment.

There is something of the Transfiguration reality implied in all these references, and still more so in many other similar statements in the Fourth Gospel; and undoubtedly, it is a "something" which renders all such divisive conceptions as "spirit" and "body," "spiritual body" and "fleshly body," "heavenly" and "earthly," "time" and "eternity," unsatisfactory as finally true, and perhaps impossible of belief as absolutely so.

It will be the aim of this book to prove that we really possess in our consciousness that "Something" which is neither spirit nor body, mind nor matter, temporal nor eternal, heavenly nor earthly (as we count these as truths), but which is yet inclusive of all and similar "relativities," and actually basal for rationalising every conception on which the Creeds of Christendom rest. This "Something" lies in every consciousness, and is termed SPACE. It ever lies in our consciousness (but inexpressible by any concept) as an absolutely deeper fact than any of these relativities, and is essential for every conception of *Substance* and *Motion* in Spirit or Body.

10. The Potential of Transfiguration in Man, and its Philosophic Basis.

But it should not escape us that this special Theophany on Mount (Hermon) is not of the highest kind. For it is one based in Relationship. There is, *e.g.*, the familiar relationship between Night and Day, Light and Dark, Mortals and Immortals, Flesh and Spirit, Father and Son, although these relationships are revealed in their highest aspect, viz., first, by the transfiguration of the Cloud from its ordinary darkness to intense brightness, for it is a cloud of light; and second, by the transfiguration of Man's conception of his Origin to its highest function of Fatherhood, beyond which all Thought itself is transfigured above all relationship absolutely. And we should understand better the whole course of Christ's life and teaching if we could realise that He is constantly leading men through these changing aspects of transfiguration, high and highest, until even Personality or every conception of "Self," divine or human, melts away in His vision, leaving only a consciousness of space-being. He epitomises, in short, as noticed above, the universal history of man on the earth, the reality of what he is conscious he is, and which it is the endeavour of man to realise and recognise in all sensible things, and in all inward images of his mind.

And far from man wandering away from such a realisation when he passes up beyond the worship of sensible things to the worship of images of his mind *until he aspires beyond all conception whatsoever*, he

is actually, by such a process, drawing nearer to the absolute truth of himself, even when he cannot put finger or thought upon *what* he is, but only confesses to a clear consciousness of qualityless being, wherein he is whole with absolute being. But this again implies energy as behind such changes. And it is this trend of force in man which he experiences to be more irresistible than the law of gravitation, as the ages run onward. This consciousness of what is deepest and last in himself, and which all men possess, *compels* man to be religious, and to value religion as his treasure of all treasures.

That is to say, the potential, which makes all transfiguration possible, lies in this abyss of man; and in Christ it was only more apparent than it is in universal man.

It is here where we find the primal basis, the only basis indeed, of the true philosophy of transfiguration. *It is the genuine vision which a man obtains of himself.* And this light of himself cancels every other vision he may have had of himself, and reduces every previous judgment he has had of all the Universe and its contents to space-vision. For the first time in the evolution of the Human Mind, Jesus of Nazareth saw this true vision of Himself, and upon it built the unshakable foundations of World-Philosophy, which at the same time is also World-Science and World-Religion.

Socrates—Plato, never came near it. Not the vision of what they were, or who they were, but of an abstract "Chaos" and "Ideas," apart from what they were, was their foundation of philosophy.

Plotinus, though he came closer to Jesus in his vision, dwelt very far from that consciousness which says with thunder-words, "*I* am the Truth: *I* am the Light: *I* am the Way: *I* am before the world was: *I* am when heaven and earth shall pass away."

And no modern system of philosophy has done better, although philosophers in such systems have erred deeper in refusing Him that spoke the Truth, and turned from it as of no account to them.

In the conscious "I Am" of Jesus, every system of thought has to start afresh. For in it all the manifold "Categories" of philosophies, East or West, past or present, disappear. He transfigures in its radiance the cosmic myriads of mind-created thoughts and things, leaving not even a "personality" or a "self" discernible by its limits. In the "eternities" gone by He was *the* Word: He was *with* God: He *was* God: *Whole-Being*. And it is this consciousness to which no man has risen before or after Him, but which lies in all men, and in which He has desired, and yet desires, all men to become transfigured with Himself.

CHAPTER II

11. Perpetual Transfiguration of Jesus.

LET us now try to see this wonder more clearly. In modern times, certain critics of Christian dogmas which pertain to Christ's "personality" ask the theologians in a gravely sportive manner, "'Jesus' or 'Christ': Which?" They point with some irony to the course of Church history, and say, "The two names cannot belong to the same personality. For 'Jesus,' the Man of Galilee, is not the same *person* which the followers of 'Christ' worship. The Christian mind has evolved through the past centuries quite a new being, called 'Christ,' as compared with the 'Jesus' whom Pontius Pilate delivered up to be crucified. The 'Son of Man' and 'Son of God' of the Gospels is not the same Appearance which we behold, *e.g.*, in the Book of Revelation, chap. i."

The theologians reply, "Most truly! Jesus has been *transfigured* before the world." And an amplification of this reply would show that Jesus, from the beginning, has been passing through a perpetual transfiguration in the human mind, by reason of the perpetually increasing illumination which still streams from His "personality." For

although the light from Him is not now sensible, or scientific, light, it is a light which yet demonstrates its *power* to lighten every man coming into the world. It is under this "energy" that the world to-day is moving. It is as genuine a transfiguration of Jesus before all mankind as was His transfiguration to Peter, James, and John. In this respect, Christ is different from Moses, Mohammed, Buddha, Zoroaster, Confucius, and others, who appear to the world to-day almost as they did during life. For transfiguration is the mark of true "divinity" in a man. Its lack is the mark of the ordinary.

12. The Transfiguration in St Peter's Experience.

We might possibly weary ourselves with instances of this perpetual transfiguration of the Man "Jesus." Six days before His ascent into the Mount of Transfiguration, Peter made a remarkable testimony to the transfiguration of Jesus in his *inward* vision. He had seen Jesus to be "the Christ, the Son of the Living God" (Matt. xvi. 16). This was illumination of the highest kind, for, as Jesus said, "Flesh and blood" had not revealed it, but the Highest, the Father in heaven. It was thus a higher kind of transfiguration than that which Peter saw on the Mount, which was one inclusively, at least, from his side, on the plane of "flesh and blood" only. And it is clear that of these two forms of transfiguration which Peter was favoured to behold, the latter is the "historical" or scientific one, appealing to the eye, and the former is the "unhistorical" one which is still going on as the ages advance, even as it has

illuminatively increased with the past centuries. But we should note that both forms of transfiguration demonstrate that Jesus' "personality" was more than either eye or mind is able to disclose; or, universally, that His, as every personality, transcends the vision of eye or of reason, and is not capable of being seen and discovered by these means, everlastingly. Peter received the same illumination by his ear in the one case as by the eye in the other. The vision to Reason was, "The Son of the living God," and to the ear on the Mount, "My beloved Son." The forms only of transfiguration were different. Their illumination or "vision" was the same.

But we have no hint that Peter saw to the end of this vision. He but grasped a section. To him, Jesus was truly God's Revealer; His Word; God speaking in the flesh. And he also discerned God to be Love, for he heard the words, "My beloved Son," which also revealed Christ's central message of God's Fatherhood.

13. The Transfiguration in St John's Experience and that of the Church.

But the transfiguration of Jesus was a far wider "vision" to the writer called John, for Jesus was to him not only the present "Word," but had been, as already said above, that Word "in the beginning" (John i. 1), and, still more, had been "*with* God," and, highest transfiguration of all, "*was* God." In such illumination we rise high above the Petrine levels, for the revelation of even the Father-Son-God which

Peter saw, does not take in all that "*was* God" and *is* God. And clearly enough, but for the "vision" of John, with its transcendent transfiguration of Jesus, we never could have rationally sustained the consciousness which pervades the synoptic words, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away," and "All power is given unto me in heaven and earth." We venture to believe also that the Book of Revelation is the same John's work, but imaginatively elaborated from the transfiguration on Mount Hermon, and the work which he afterwards transcended in his Gospel.

It took the Church of Jesus 325 years (the date of the Nicene Council and Creed) to rise to the great height of this transfiguration of the Lord—that is to say, the "Christ" of her vision, and of so many years of historic development. Throughout these 325 years there is a clear sequence of the Ascent of Jesus from being, to the common people, a Man of wonder-working gifts; to the Twelve as Chief of such wonder-workers; to Peter as the "Son of the Living God"; and to John as One *before* all time, *with* God, and *God* Himself. Jesus, in John's vision, transcends all other forms of transfiguration, in his elimination of Time from His personality, and all duality of Father and Son, God and Man.

And such historical vision again evolved itself out of the transfiguration which took place in the "vision" of Peter and John, even as their "vision," in turn, evolved out of the transfiguration which Jesus had of Himself.

14. The Secret of all Transfiguration.

For, as pointed out above, it is this inmost transfiguration of what-he-is, to a man himself, which is the secret of all transfiguration. It is a continuous evolving process from birth to death. And Jesus was no exception. Rather, He was its highest type and illustration. But the Church has never yet seen Him as He saw Himself, in His inmost consciousness of Himself; and, until this takes place, His transfiguration in the mind of mankind must necessarily continue with the centuries still to come. It is so with all men.

For it is a more comprehensive law than any other known to man, that (as has been already quoted) "there is *nothing hid*," though it *were* the human dead, "save that it should be manifested, neither *anything secret* (though buried deep in past time), but that it should come to light." Out of the great and immeasurable womb of Space-Being all has become manifest, under the directing consciousness of the same Being, and in myriad forms is still being manifested. But, unfortunately, that which is manifested as *Man*, has judged itself to be a limited isolated *one;* a *different* being from this supreme Being; and so differentiated being from all other being, absolutely. The Petrine levels of Time-limits and Duality of Being have been reached, but not the consciousness controlling the thought of St John. Consequently man finds himself continually in a maze of errors which have to be rectified with the assertion of a higher consciousness of Being which approaches nearer the supreme Consciousness; and

therefore is in continuous transfiguration of personal light until all that lies hid in the supreme Consciousness is manifested in it. And this compelling revelation of true Being has come with Jesus, interpreted through His own consciousness of Himself in fuller measure than by any other agency brought forth in the age of this world. And from this fact, it is clear that His consciousness of Himself must dominate the world more and more, even though it is necessarily reflected through the feebler forms of consciousness in His disciples, and in what they have written concerning His. It seems evident, also, that, first, every human consciousness will always be under the transfiguring power of the consciousness of Jesus, until, with Peter, James, and John, universal man stands in the same supreme light of true Being as He did Himself; and second, *that human consciousness, His own especially, must ever be the only infallible test of absolute light and truth.* For the "I AM" consciousness has nothing superior to it in truth. It transfigures all other forms of truth.

15. Transfiguration in the Synoptists and Fourth Gospel.

Neglect of this profound fact has led to many unhappy controversies in Christendom, among which we must rank what is called the "Johannine Controversy" of our own time—that exegetical disease of Christian erudition.

The Synoptic Gospels undoubtedly do transfigure Jesus, or show Him a man, as transfigured to human eyes in such aspect as never was seen by men of

a man before, but He is still further transfigured in the Book of Revelation, and yet more so in the John Gospel, and from a far higher plane of the consciousness of His Being; a fuller and truer, and one more in consonance with every man's consciousness, as also with the Son of Man's own consciousness of Himself. And if the John Gospel has failed to manifest all of the consciousness of Jesus concerning His own Being, it will fall yet to be made known in the infinitely expanding experience of future man. This will be then the *absolute* transfiguration of Jesus.

16. Progressive Transfiguration through *Life* and *Light*.

We may now venture to say that in the widest and highest sense the emphatic teaching of Jesus' transfiguration is *Progressive Illumination*, self-effected; an up-springing-light of personality, inherent and innate, but prayer-opened and prayer-suffused, along with the sole source of light in the individual self. It means much more than if one should say "Let there be light," for the benefit of another. Transfiguration means this voice speaking perpetually *from within all being*, independent of any compulsion from without. And prayer supplies the conditions of its shining forth.

It is, moreover, not only light of the sun, but the light of Life. In the "abyss" of man as in the "abyss" of the Universe, the spectrum of Being, which in the highest sense is space-being, gives, first, the chord of infinite, indeterminate existence, wave-like flowing up into living, determined forms; and,

second, such life merging into that *Light*, which is *consciousness* of Being. On the other hand, all that is unconscious is life not yet risen into the chord of light. From which we should infer that where there is light there is life, as preceding it.

And whereas by light we are conscious of the universe "without," and by light we are conscious of all "within" us, such common light ought to rest upon common life, and be its incandescence in all its forms within us as without. Or, *light should be life transfigured.* "The light of life," therefore, in the mouth of Jesus, should mean His statement of a universal scientific order of being. It should be more than metaphorical or rhetorical. It should be factual and of the highest science.

That this chord of "light" in the absolute spectrum of existence was common to the material as to the immaterial universe, is evident in the fact that the disciples had a common consciousness of its similarity to the light of the sun, and to that *light of knowledge* in their minds concerning Moses and Elijah. It lit up both the material and the mental, or immaterial, spheres of being. And, as glowing out of the Man Jesus, it seemed to warrant Him to the universal reason of mankind as being as truly our guide to the knowledge of "Nature" as to the nature of Man. By His light the Cloud was *seen* as well as the Voice heard and *understood*, glowing from the same life. And it is for this reason that we must refer the truth of transfiguration to the *ultimate* content, or affirmation, in our "personality," the affirmation "I am," and also to the *ultimate* content not merely of con-

ceptions and perceptions but of our *consciousness* of the Universe which is Space. For unless a fact is absolutely universal, or limitless, it can never be absolutely true. *And it is only in our consciousness of what we are, and our consciousness of Space that we find this illimitability of same being.*

17. "Nature" as Whole and Undivided.

But as this point of view is important as establishing the Transfiguration and all the "signs" which Jesus did as within the scope of "Nature," so considered, we must set the facts of the Transfiguration before us more vividly in order that they may give us a clearer light on what they imply.

The Source of the light by which the disciples *saw* Moses and Elijah was light from Jesus. By His light they all *perceived* one another. It must have been light affecting the senses, or ordinary light which affects the eye. There was nothing *unnatural* about it. And similarly, Voice-sounds must have been impressive to their ears. Hence, of course, the words "Hear ye Him." Consequently the Cloud-Voice was heard in the same natural conditions as was the voice of Peter when he said, "Let us build here," etc. And it would imply that as Jesus, Moses, and Elijah talked together, the voices of the "spiritual" beings were in no wise differently conditioned from that of the mortal one of Jesus. The basis for the sense organs was the same in Nature for both kinds of beings on the mountain.

But this conclusion is impossible to our rational conceptions unless we first abandon the view that

the things of Time are by their nature completely different from the things of Eternity. If "things unseen and eternal" arise out of a different root in Being from the "things seen and temporal," the human mind is not able to conceive or believe, on a basis of rational fact, that the disciples saw light and heard sounds in the way described in the wonderful and unusual scene. We are prevented by the *seen* and *unseen* view of human and divine creation, and the total severance of the *material* from the *spiritual* world, which all Christendom professes. No foundation of thought or reason upon which philosophy, science, and theology have hitherto taught mankind, is serviceable to us in the order of this understanding. Hence the temptation to give the whole account of such "miracles" into the spectral hands of mystery, and to place our intelligence in an atmosphere of asphyxiation or scepticism.

Nevertheless, when we consult our deepest consciousness along with the simple narrative, the unity or rather the *wholeness* of it all is irresistible. And we should remember that this consciousness of undividedness between time past and time present, things human and things divine, matter and spirit, the living and the dead, the voice of God and the voice of man, is not new or special to Christianity. It has been the common possession of the derided superstitions of mankind in all ages.

It is therefore a Unity, to call it no more, which asserts itself against all the logical and scientifically dialectical conclusions to the contrary. And this must be due to a profounder basis in our conscious-

ness of *what Truth is* than that upon which world-reason stands. For against the accumulated brilliancy of world-intelligence up to the present day, this conviction remains. And the undoubted *cul de sac* into which philosophy, science, and theology now find themselves regarding the Unity and Differentiation of Being, seems to suggest that all is not well with human judgment upon these matters. We assert, *e.g.*, that Spirit and Matter are Two, and eternally to be Two, and then find that God-Man, as "One," according to Jesus, cannot as a consequence be true. The two psychological findings clash. Hence, of course, the agonising effort of the Church of the past to find Jesus of "one *substance* with the Father," "to be acknowledged in two natures without confusion, change, division, separation," a result which is confessedly ingenious but very unsatisfactory to our thought, which ever craves something more as to the meaning of the term "substance."

18. Space as Being, and Basis of All Being Absolutely.

The problem of the Transfiguration, as of Jesus' "signs," resurrection, and similar "violations of the laws of nature," point to human knowledge as having a profounder ultimate than we experience through perceptions and conceptions. And as a matter of fact, this is given to us in our *knowledge* of Space. For we neither can perceive nor conceive Space. Yet we are conscious that Space is. And this experience is not dependent on percepts or concepts. We have such knowledge of being which we name

Space. And this affirmation of Space, as Being, is also an infinite or inexhaustible affirmation.

We learn this by a very simple trial. We look, *e.g.*, at a tree, accompanying our perception of the tree with our consciousness of Space, and at the same time hold the conviction that Space and the tree are two, or at least divided. If we then try to ascertain which of the two must pass away in the everlasting "flow" of all things, and *which* of the two will remain eternally, we always conclude that the tree is in the "Flow" and that Space is not. If we tried the same comparison between Space and a star, or the Universe itself, we should find that our conviction would be the same, viz., *that heaven and earth shall pass away, but that Space cannot pass away.* And this conviction is based on our consciousness alone, and is independent of knowledge of space derived through perceptions or conceptions. In other words, Space *affirms*, and, it must be added now, that Space alone affirms in our consciousness, *Being*, by an everlasting and inexhaustible affirmation. The affirmation is Absolute, or Whole.

On the other hand, if in a similar trial we endeavour to affirm the being of the tree, the star, or the Universe, with Space as non-existent, we find that it is impossible. *The consciousness of Space-presence must be with us when we affirm the existence of anything whatever.* From which we can deduce the important fact that our perceptions are never divided from our conceptions, nor our "mind" from our "matter." Space-presence is the essential and necessary being for both, and, seeing that neither

can *be* without Space, Space takes the place of *Cause.*

We have, therefore, a simultaneous capacity to *know* all that comes within Form and Colour, etc., as well as all that lies within the Formless and Colourless, the world of "Matter," as well as the sphere of "Spirit." The potential within us for the one is as real as the potential within us for the other. Consequently, in realising what is meant by perception and conception, or a percept and a concept, we are not shut up to the view that "mind" and "matter" being cut apart, "as with a hatchet," mind must go forth to the object in nature and *perceive* it, returning as it were with material from which mind forms a *concept* of it. We are compelled also to realise that What-we-are is never apart from Space, consonant with the whole of the Universe, and that for ourselves as for all that is thinkable, Space-Being and I-Being are same-being. It is impossible to think them as Two.

Therefore with such certainty of Being which we are conscious is basal for our knowledge of both "Body" and "Spirit," and in which these concepts are subsumed, we are bound to disregard the old psychology which girds our "Soul" within the skin of our "Body," and rather reckon our "Soul" as far more *beyond* than confined to it. As consciously space-being, we can understand that no geographical limits need be made for What-we-are. And in this light we realise why it is that we can perceive and conceive simultaneously all that we do perceive and conceive, either through our senses or within our

"mind." *The "Without" and the "Within" are identical being in space-being.* We discern that what we term "soul" as different from "body"; and "spirit" again as different from "Nature"; and "spirit," "body," and "nature" as all three isolated beings, is fanciful, and entirely due to a broken interpretation of our consciousness which has not exhausted the content of that consciousness to the utmost.

19. The Category of Unity Restrictive to All Thought.

And perhaps it might be an advantage to the reader if we outline here the sphere in which his thoughts are to be directed in the following pages (and possibly too often repeated) as a help both to memory and clear judgment.

All the thinking of mankind hitherto has found its ultimate basis in UNITY. For example, all Religion, in its myriad complexities, bases itself in *One* Being—it may be a material object, an idol, a Man, or a God. Whatever is worshipped is conceived as *one*, that is, an Object, which is apart from, and *not* the person who worships. Science, also, including sciences of every nomenclature, sets an Object before it. Even when the Object is unknown, such as ether, Science believes it to be objective, an Object to be known. The object, also, need not be always a material one. There is a science of Logic, science of *form* of thought, mental science, etc. But the object of all scientific investigation must have Form and Unity. This is sometimes called a necessary "presupposition"!

Philosophy is believed to be the highest science, the knowledge of the Ultimate, the Absolute, the Unknown, etc. But hitherto, from the days of Socrates and Plato, downwards in time, the root struggle of all thinking minds has been towards UNITY. The "Ultimate" aimed at is *One;* the "Absolute" is One; the "Infinite" is One; the "Unknown" is One. Sometimes this One shapes itself into a Totality, a Universal, etc., but these are but variant forms of UNITY. Again, philosophy may be Dual in expression, but duality is just One repeated, as is Plurality. Unity is the ultimate basis: a conscious *Quantity.*

Therefore, Religion, Science, and Philosophy never get outside of this restrictive Unity, and in all three it is this restriction that compels an irreducible consciousness of limitation. They are like three birds in a cage which has three departments. And this restriction seems invulnerable, for all three assume the commanding postulate that the Thinker, who from his thought and consciousness rears these Systems, is *himself* fundamentally One, and consequently must reflect his own unity in everything.

Man universally has affirmed, "I am — *one.*" And according to the psychology of Jesus, this is untrue. He represented a deeper consciousness of universal being than has yet found a place in Religion, Science, or Philosophy. And therefore, following His leading, we pass beyond the sphere of consciousness in which these Three Systems, world-wide, work, move, and have their being, and affirm on the basis of Consciousness alone, that Being, in

Man or in Nature, is far more than One which is always Form, and limitation, and assert that Being is Whole. Now, this affirmation of whole-Being is the key to all explanation of happenings in heaven and earth, although it rests on no mere "pre-supposition." A thing—*any* thing—would be fully and absolutely explained if it referred itself alone to itself, *having no relation absolutely to any possible other.* But the transfiguration of Jesus implies fulness of relationship to others: to men, to cloud, to past time, to future time, and finally, as supposed, to All-pervading and All-embracing Space.

Yet it is in this All-embracing Space that we find the key to an absolute explanation of the transfiguration of Jesus, of all He was and said and did, as well as of all the "relativities" of the Cosmos. *For space alone refers itself to itself absolutely, acknowledging no other possible.* It is therefore Conscious Being of all being, and without which it is not possible to the Human Mind to think, or even image anything *to be.* And we shall endeavour in the following sections, more particularly after Section 31, to show that in Jesus' consciousness, Space-Being and I-Being are same-Being.

The consciousness of man, according to Jesus, asserts Boundless Being in his "I AM," and is the true Infinite, the true Absolute, the true Unknown, of which the corresponding terms in religion, science, and philosophy, are but superficial reflections. Every perception and conception known to the human mind gives but a meagre fraction of truth as compared with that Consciousness, which we call "I."

CHAPTER III

20. Jesus as Commanding both Temporal and Eternal Light.

THEREFORE our common conception of Eternal Being as self-sufficient and self-existent, Whole-as-Space, seems to find a certain confirmation from the Transfiguration of Jesus. He was temporarily transfigured in His own light, but He also stood in the eternal light of His own being, as we have said. He commanded both. And this virtue, or capacity, is the same which we usually attribute to Eternal Being. And consequently, we should be encouraged to regard the vast Universe of "Nature" as the continuous and ever-ceaseless transfiguration of what Eternal Being is. The Unappearing appears in such *Form*, even as Thought, Feeling, and Willing appear from our own unappearing being. And our nearest apprehension of such Form of the Unappearing is in our consciousness of absolute Space, or that which *is*, but which is formless to all human thought or imagination. Our own consciousness of what *we* are vouches the same Truth in an identical affirmation of space-being.

Jesus thus becomes the "light" to Eternal Being as it speaks in man's conscious "I am." And the

"light" is incapable of shadow, even as space is. It is so absolute also that philosophers and seers and poets have maintained, in such testamentary light by which man knows he *is*, that man, puny as he seems, is himself the true key to the transfiguring or illumination of the Universe and all its perplexing problems.

> "Thou, whose *exterior* semblance doth belie
> Thy *Soul's* immensity;
> . . . Thou Eye among the blind,
> That, deaf and silent read'st the eternal deep,
> Haunted forever by the eternal Mind."

21. Transfiguration Verified in Scientific History.

For although the scientific intellect views with considerable distrust all explanations of problems in other light than that which can be verified under mere physical conditions, it has to be admitted that transfiguration is as universal a fact in scientific realms as in those of religion. Surely the testimony of scientific facts is to-day a testimony to the transfiguration of all Nature. As one writer puts it, our age "has learnt that the eternal fixity of species is an illusion, and that all the myriad forms of life have had a common ancestry, and that the same is probably true of the various forms of 'matter.' It has witnessed the dethroning of Euclid, and of Newton, the shattering of the atom, the transmutation of elements, and the gravitation of light. It practises the art of flying, despite its proverbial impossibility, and exploits the ether for the purposes of wireless propaganda. No wonder it has got un-

settled in its traditional ideas and finds it embarrassing to say at what point its scientific credulity should stop, and what marvels it should refuse to swallow as transcending human capacity of belief."

This is simply Nature under transfiguration, and as verifying that fact. It is a "vision" which former generations beheld not. The discoveries are marvellous. Newton himself would have been astonished at such a "vision." Yet as compared with the "nature" which men beheld *before* his time, his light shed a genuine transfiguring glow upon the universe. The poet spake truly—

> "Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in night,
> God said, 'Let Newton be,' and all was light."

It was a true revelation of what eye had not seen nor ear heard, and of what had not hitherto entered into the mind of man to conceive. It was revelation of that "Beyond" which lies ever *in* man and *before* man in "Nature," an unfolding transfiguring light which is ever going forward far above the slow scientific footsteps that come within the sphere of its shining.

And in a somewhat timid, stumbling way, men are gradually becoming used to the "*vision*" *of such transfiguration as being a universal order which includes within itself both Nature, so-called, and all Humanity.* The Transfiguration of Jesus was a "vision" of Man, hitherto hidden and concealed from men, in the same way that we are beholding in our own time a "vision" of Nature, which has heretofore been "hid in Night."

Therefore, we claim to say that the Transfiguration of Jesus should not be considered as something standing apart from the experience of the Universe, but as only one of the high points of that illuminating and universal Light which shoots forward into the Everlasting. The same light that flashed then out of Jesus is to-day radiating forth from Man as from universal Nature, giving the same "vision" to the drowsy eyes of the few who toil long uphill in darkness, and often sceptically mistake their own weakness and the mountain top for the finality of all things.

22. Phenomenon of Transfiguration Fading in Darkness.

And as the introspective vision gives us the same spatial realisation as does the prospective vision of the outward eye, *it is clear that Space is our ultimate fact*, uncreated, unchangeable, indestructible, and our most utter realisation of *what Is*, or true *Being*. And if we count Space-Being as ultimate Being, for our experience of Nature without and Nature within, then Transfiguration is a principle which is as verifiable in the one "sphere" as in the other. We should naturally assume, therefore, that all we find in our "personality" should be found in all-embracing space, viz., spirit, life, thought, will, desire, etc., etc. But here we must always guard ourselves from the common mistake which attributes to the affirmation "I," the quality of *one*-ness, limitation, and such like. For there are no qualities in this consciousness any more than in space. Nothing can

be truly said of it except the affirmation *Is:* "I." The assumptions we attribute to the "I" are also given to the Cosmos. The Universe is said to be *one*, objective, limited, etc., but this can only be said of sun, moon, and stars grouped individually or as a *total*, and not of space. In a similar way, we ascribe unity to memory, attention, will, idea, and totalise them in a unity as "mind," but we cannot do this with the "I" which remembers, wills, conceives, etc. There is only the same consciousness for the "I" as for space.

Transfiguration, therefore, should be accepted as the normal and natural course through which Eternal Reality is being constantly manifested to the eye and "mind" and "spirit" of men. It is the grand fact of all time, and is clearly a form of that *necessity* which compels all choice and all change. The narrower scientific term is, as has been said above, "Evolution," but "transfiguration" is of wider significance and deeper import, including as it does the profounder things of the "spirit" as well as those of "Nature." "Our little systems have their day," and especially our Credal systems, because Jesus, the Man, is being perpetually transfigured before us, the *Man* thereby being more and more hidden from our sight in the appearance of the light of "the Son of the Living God," the "majesty of God" to mankind. *Per contra*, as His light glows clearer and wider over the world, so the ever-widening "vision" of the truth of Man and his Universe dawns upon the human view. And thus, the light which the ancients and the forefathers have for centuries

adored, and in which they have reared their creeds and categories, "fades into the light of common day." The former "vision," the truth, the light which filled the world with wonder as "the glory and freshness of a dream," becomes in its Change as the "earth and every common sight"; and thus we again awake to the darkness around us, and the departed Voices and the Glory gone on, and up, to higher things. All which seems to say that Man has not yet beheld the highest transfiguration of either Nature, himself, or Jesus Christ.

Moreover, as the long course of intellectual progress proves, it is found to be necessary in such circumstances to tear up the old built tabernacles from their foundations. The old creeds of religion are then as lamps going, or gone out, the old "Categories" of philosophy become as broken chords, soundless and meaningless. We walk in darkness, and have no light. Hope then lies only in The Christ. He abides by our side, in the shadow of the vanishing light. And it will perhaps never cease to be mysteriously merciless to His distracted Peters (too ready to beg for things to be tent-fixed, not knowing what they say) that Christ, in order to attain to the departed Glory and the Father-Voice in the higher ascent upwards, should first take the dark path downwards from the heights to mingle with the diseased, the agonising, the helpless, the unbelieving, and go onwards to His Calvary, and the "Exodus" (ἔξοδον) which He was to accomplish at Jerusalem. He does not ascend with the same ascension experienced by Moses and

Elijah. For he knows the higher path to holier planes of being than they have known, by humbling Himself to the lowest levels of suffering Mankind.

23. The Higher Transfiguration of Jesus to the Multitude.

His is the true path to still higher and more glorious transfiguration. This fact receives speedy and conspicuous illustration. For "when they were come down from the mountain, a great multitude met Him, and behold a man from the multitude cried, saying, Master, I beseech thee to look upon my son, for he is mine only child, and behold, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out, and it teareth him that he foameth, and it hardly departeth from him, bruising him sorely." . . . But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the boy and gave him back to his father. And they were *all* astonished *at the majesty of God*" (Luke ix. 37-43).

It is the last verse of this account which shows that Jesus was now truly transfigured to the Twelve, and to a great crowd, in a higher "vision" than the Three had beheld on the mountain-top. They all saw in Him "the Majesty of God." No such expression of the "vision" of Godhead was evoked from the Three Apostles as they gazed in fear on the marvellous transfiguration of the previous day. They saw and heard *there* the Deity, as lodged wholly in Nature and as a Being apart from Jesus. Here, in the healing of the boy, the Deity is discerned as lodged and tabernacled within *Him*. *He* is the Form, the Flesh-Cloud, out of which the

Father-God speaks life and healing to the boy, and joy to the stricken father of him. For just as we all have the same ultimate consciousness of same Being within and without us, so the consciousness of Jesus owns no divisions of Absolute Being as a "without" or a "within." The abyss-consciousness always affirms Being as Whole to Him. This is a higher transfiguration, involving *Life* as well as *Light* for the world. "Jesus," the man of Galilee, from this point sets forth on His way to become the "Christ" of the ages. The *Light* seen on the mountain's brow is revealed as *Life* at its foot.

24. Examples of His Higher Transfiguration.

It is a common remark that no one ever sees twice the same face of Nature. It is in perpetual transfiguration. It is always an illuminating as well as a changing view. And it is the same with Jesus. It is a strong characteristic of Him from the beginning. No one ever saw Him twice in the same light, and His light was an increasing one. This would be quite apparent even if we merely selected proofs at random.

For example, Peter, after a hard night's work, lets down the nets at His Master's command, and thereby encloses a great number of fishes. So much is Jesus then transfigured before him that Peter is overpowered by His presence. "Depart from me," he cries, "for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Nathaniel approaches Him for the first time, and sees nothing more remarkable than "Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph," a very doubtful person from such a place

as Nazareth. Jesus speaks a few words to him, and then the transfiguration of the Nazarene becomes as blinding in its light as it was to Paul near Damascus. "Rabbi," he exclaims, "Thou art the Son of God, Thou art King of Israel."

In the instance of His stilling the tempest on the lake, even the Twelve, who had seen Him doing many mighty works, "feared exceedingly and said, Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?" Jesus is truly in processional transfiguration to them. But, indeed, the entire narrative of His life and death is one of prolonged transfiguration. No one escaped from the amazement He always created, friend or foe, and no one escapes yet, when He is genuinely realised. He is the supreme wonder of all time.

Conspicuous examples of this fact could be found in cases like that of Mary Magdalene in the garden, and Thomas in the upper room. But the most vivid is perhaps given us in the account of the journey of the two disciples to Emmaus in Jesus' company (Luke xxiv. 13). Not prominent as His followers, but from the outskirts of the crowds that flocked after him, they saw in Him "a prophet mighty in deed and word before God, and all the people." They had seen Him in such light as to hope "that it was He who should redeem Israel" (Acts i. 6). But, alas, He had been crucified along with common malefactors, and all had perished in utter darkness. The "Messiah" of the ages could *not* be such a person. *He* would sit upon the throne of David and of Solomon; rule the nations with a rod of

iron, and break them in pieces like a potter's vessel. All nations would serve *Him.* He would not die.

25. Transfiguration of the Old Testament.

As was proved to them, the obscuration of Jesus from this height of glory was caused by darkness from their own hearts. And the light began once more to dawn upon them when He drew near to them in the way, and "opened to them the Scriptures." These being their highest authority, He naturally confronted them with the light they revealed. These Scriptures, the "light from heaven," had proved the "light that led astray." Or rather, these men had failed to exhaust all the truth that these Scriptures contain upon man's way of life, when they are read in the broader and larger meaning of universal History. And as Jesus interpreted them "concerning Himself" they became convinced in the truth which He revealed, that it *so* "behoved Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into His glory." That is to say, these same Scriptures were transfigured before them. Moses and the prophets, and "all the Scriptures" blazed up in a new vision of wondrous brightness. They had been long accustomed to find their Messiah foreshadowed and typified in almost every page of them. But they had lost view of the wood among the trees. They had failed till then to discern that suffering of the direst had invariably been the lot of all who had sought to obey the will of God, of whom their Scriptures had record, and that no one

had entered into "glory" of any kind without first passing through the furnaces of suffering.

As usual, the height of the great argument is only given, but not the pathway by which Jesus led them up to it. But as we know the Scriptures through which He took them, and that He dealt with "*all* the Scriptures," the force of the word "all" justifies us in believing that He did not linger within portions and texts of them, but treated them in a wide historical form. He would also treat them from their point of view, viz., as perfect records. As Archbishop Trench has suggested, Jesus would in all likelihood point them to the promise—"It shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise His heel," where suffering stands foremost as a characteristic of the promised redemption. He might also point to the Brazen Serpent and the Paschal Lamb, and all the typical personages of the Old Testament from Abel downwards, every one of whom had only too serious illustration of the fact that if they did attain to "glory" it was by the road of pain, persecution, and death that they travelled. We have only to quote the eleventh chapter of Hebrews to see how effective such a method of reasoning might become in His hands. For apart from Abel and Enoch and Noah, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob had had no other fate than one of suffering meted out to them on their journey upward. Joseph had gone through pit and dungeon to the right hand of a throne; Moses, from the day he lay in the ark of bulrushes till he died in the wilderness, had had only misery for his companion, and Gideon, Barak,

Samson, Jephthah, Samuel and David and the Prophets—all had walked with God in His terror and majesty. And these are but the high peaks in the range. Below, in the common landscape, the nameless masses presented a vast tide of anguish rolling onwards in horrors of great darkness. "Women received their dead by a resurrection, and others were tortured, not accepting their deliverance . . . others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment; they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword, . . . of whom the world was not worthy, wandering in deserts and mountains and caves, and the holes of the earth" (Hebrews, chap. xi.); and then there were such as Job, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, Daniel, and Jonah and Zechariah, and many others, glorious only and chiefly in the greatness of suffering. Was there any "glory" worthy of the name to be achieved upon the earth in any other way? "O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe." And their hearts burned within them! *It was indeed the transfiguration of the Scriptures to them.* They learned, for the first time, what is frequently overlooked even yet, viz., that the *Word of God*, the light of Absolute Being, is neither confined to a Book nor to a Person, both of which are but the letters of its alphabet, or the colouring stuffs of its picture. *The Bible, e.g., as a book can never be more than the words of men about the Word of God*, and if Jesus was truly and personally the Word of God, it was that Word limited to human flesh, for our advantage as limited men. *Words* and

Flesh and *Person* are limited things, but the Word of God has no limits, and Jesus, in His interpretation of the Hebrew Rolls to these two anxious disciples, spelt out for them the Word of God as it is written for all mankind and all time, in *lives* and *centuries*, and not merely in Roll-records, texts, and family traditions. He interpreted their people's "history" on high philosophical levels, and we should remember this method of teaching when we read such statements of His as that *Moses* accused the Jews of Christ's own day, and that *Moses* wrote of Him (John v. 45-46). He was teaching the truth as the whole *life* of Moses had declared it, and not as Moses' tongue or pen might have set it down. The language Christ read was the language of Moses' life, and not the language of the Hebrews about that life. And for every man in this world, the testimony which he gives of the Eternal, a testimony he cannot avoid giving, is written in his *life* and not in what he says or writes about the Eternal. And thus these two men saw this Word of God as Christ saw it, and their hearts took fire at the sight, even as Moses was thrilled by the Presence in the Bush, and as all hearts ever will burn in the transfiguring light of God.

26. The Absolute Transfiguration of the Man Jesus.

And now followed the transfiguration of the *Man* to these two, as following the transfiguration of the Old Testament *Scriptures*. Christ sat down with them to meat, as they desired. He took the bread,

and blessed it, and break it and gave to them. "And their eyes were opened and they knew Him." Then he became to them, not a mere human body, the Man Jesus, set in a brighter glow of light than that of the sun, but *a new being*, the great Presence of their God, who in flesh had been incarnate, crucified, and raised from the dead, and was now exalted to the invisible and eternal Glory. It was also a genuine Ascension, the transfiguration which is taking place to-day among men all over the world, as the light of Jesus falls upon them. And the same wonder follows, viz., as soon as He appears transfigured to them He vanishes, or rather, *reveals Himself to them as Space-Being*, His *Absolute Transfiguration.* Then, for Him, no Object gives *Form* or *Light.* He is *seen* only by pure Consciousness in the same light by which we see our "Souls," the light of lights, *i.e.* space.

27. The Unceasing Transfiguration of Man.

But clearly, this Absolute Transfiguration involves a precedent Progress, which again implies *Room.* And this is Space, the sole Absolute of Consciousness. For if we assumed immeasurable *Matter* to be an Absolute, or *Time*, Consciousness would refuse them, for, to Consciousness, Space is infinitely vaster than such "Matter" or such "Time." The human consciousness, in short, has always a marginless capacity for all or any conceptions which present *Objects*, small or great, to our common understanding. That is to say, *Consciousness and Space coalesce*, and do so outside and above all Thought or Imagination of Being.

We cannot think them as different, for (speaking dually for purposes of reasoning) neither presents any quality, quantity, or relationship, by which it can be defined as Objective, or as just and only itself. And both "Matter" and "Time" are objectives to the understanding.

Space and Consciousness, although named differently, are thus identical in Being. And we might notice in passing that, being the Absolute, no novelty is admissible within it. *Nothing is ever absolutely new to Consciousness*, that is, to Space. We only say of anything, "It has *Become*"; a *something* that has *proceeded*. And this last fact was explained by the ancients as *Reminiscence* of what had been known in a previous existence (see the *Phaedrus*, 249 and 250). But Reminiscence is Memory, and Memory deals solely with *concepts*, or judgments which are pure creations of the human mind, and strictly limited. Moreover, Consciousness could not admit "a previous Existence" to this existence which we all experience, before admitting the possibility of "a previous" Space to this Space which holds the Universe! And this possibility is the Absurd. Consciousness, that is, and Space affirm the same Absolute Truth in being the same Absolute.

Therefore, although our "dead" vanish from sight and understanding, as Jesus from the Emmaus' men, they are not extinct, but, to Consciousness, are as enduring as Space-Being.

It seems also evident that if we passed in review Christ's entire history on Earth, we should find the same transfiguring power and principle at work in

all He said and did. *He is ever and in every way ascending.* And we trust it is now clearer to us, what we have already mentioned, viz., that, whether He as Man rises into higher *Light*, as in the Transfiguration, or into higher *Life*, as in the Resurrection, or into higher *Being*, as in the Ascension which involves both, the same universal truth of Absolute Exaltation is shadowed forth before us, and man is shown openly the unending path of his eternal destiny to be ever upwards, as He said, "to my Father and your Father, and my God and your God."

PART II

THE PHILOSOPHY OF PRAYER

"As He was Praying."

CHAPTER IV

28. Jesus reads his Consciousness "without Mistakes."

PRAYER, in the widest sense, is asking to know What-we-are. When we have reached such knowledge, which is at the same time our highest consciousness of what-we-are, all prayer, quest, inquiry, asking, seeking, knocking, ceases. Prayer for anything else or less than this, is on the lower sphere of *relative* prayer. Jesus states relative prayer in the form we use as "The Lord's Prayer," but He passes up from this to the absolute expression, "Ask and it shall be given you, seek . . . knock . . . " where there is no Objective of prayer stated, and which He leaves wide open as the Universe, that is, Space (Matthew vii. 7; Luke xi. 9).

And it is clear that it is this absolute Objective which the Scientist sets before himself as he asks, seeks, knocks, throughout the vastitudes of Cosmic Knowledge; and which the Philosopher addresses in his asking, seeking, knocking, towards the Absolute Knowledge of both Cosmos and Man; and which the Religionist beseeches in asking, seeking, and knocking, towards Absolute "Spirit." In other words, the grand progress of the world as we survey

it on its foundations of Science, Philosophy, and Religion, is entirely due to Prayer, as defined in the absolute terms which Christ set forth. And it is also evident that the highest product of each is knowledge of What- or Who-we-are.

Jesus contrasts relative and absolute prayer in Luke xi. 9-13. He reasons, *i.e.*, from the case of a father supplying a son's wants asked as "loaf" and "fish," to the absolute case of one receiving the Holy Spirit—a gift which includes all possible wants of Man, and finally closes all asking, seeking, and knocking. For no possible effort of the human mind can put limitations to Spirit in *Being* and *Value*. This is "God." And the Asker then stands in an experience which is absolute transfiguration.

But, of course, this assertion calls for more elaborate explanation than at first appears on the surface. For it implies that Man in such experience comes to realise What-he-is as absolute, and brings us immediately into the presence of that *consciousness of Personality* which was peculiar to Jesus in His Teaching. As ancient and modern Thought have defined Personality, to qualify it as absolute in a man is to utter the impossible. But, in Christ's teaching, such a view of Personality does not exist. To understand, therefore, all that underlies the consciousness of absolute transfiguration, we must try to find an absolute *basis* for the Being we are, *i.e.*, our Personality.

Absolute Transfiguration, it is evident, as applied to Man, conflicts with the view of *personality* upheld by both ancient and modern philosophy. They drew

nothing from the consciousness of Being which governs the life and teaching of Jesus. The ultimate foundation of human personality has been rationalised by them as Unit-Being, whose chief characteristic was variously defined as "Spirit," "Thought," or "Will," and others similar.

But the restrictions of Unit-Being are fatal to absoluteness of personality, as it lies in the consciousness of Jesus. The ocean cannot be asked to accept the banks of a river. Therefore we must, here, in what follows, attempt to lay bare that deeper "Urphänomen," boundless and vergeless as Existence, which He made the basis of His doctrine. We refer to His consciousness of "I AM." Did He limit His personality to Unit-Being while declaring that He was also the "Father" and likewise the "Holy Spirit," that He was to be *in* the Disciples and they *in* Him? Who can read His words, "Whosoever shall receive one of such little children in My name, receiveth Me, and whoso receiveth Me, *receiveth not Me, but Him that sent Me*," and still retain the postulate of Unit-personality which is so prominent in all psychological and philosophical work? "The words are almost childlike in their simplicity," says the late Prof. Wm. Sanday, "and yet they lead up to the highest heights and down to the deepest depths. No doubt, we may rationalise it all away, if we please. We may shut out the mystery from our minds. But we shall not keep it out for long" (*Criticism of the Fourth Gospel*).

There is more here than a conventional substitution of one person for another or a transference of

values from a lower personality to a higher. *We have a steady ascent of common being through all persons.* And in the consciousness of Jesus, it is clear that he far surpasses the conception of Unit-Personality, mediated by the qualities of Thought, Will, Ego, Spirit, or any other similar entity of the human mind. Absolute transfiguration, therefore, as characterising all being, must have an absolute basis, which Unit-Being cannot have, and such a basis must be as evident in sense, and sensation, as in thought, and be completely satisfactory to that consciousness which is in us all as to What-we-are.

This absolute basis is consciousness itself. And it is under this consciousness that the whole seething world of perceptions and conceptions is forever rising and sinking, appearing and disappearing. They are but lesser and limited *judgments*, constituting horizons for thought, but are in no wise permanent. Therefore, whatever man is conscious of, he will realise in it his own being, and all its infinite possibilities. Jesus did not risk mere guesses when He said, "Be ye perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect," or when He contemplated the Eternal Will being done on earth as it was in heaven. He found such absolutes in His own and every man's consciousness. And because of this consciousness all our conceptions are forever being made and remade, as ever striving towards this goal as the ages run. And it is this same consciousness which is also the creator of what we call *Prayer*, as we try to show below.

We have referred to the revealing light which, through nigh two thousand years, has trans-

figured "Jesus of Nazareth" into the "Christ" of Christendom; and to the lack of such transfiguring light as changing, in a similar way, such figures as Moses, Mohammed, and other great "lights" of the world. It may be safely said that the forms of such as Socrates, Plato, St Paul, Abraham, Job, and many others who are visible to us on the historical plane, are now in the process of being merged in the "light of common day," rather than increasing in higher brilliancy. That they have been transfigured before mankind in past centuries, is undoubted. That they are now merging into deeper shadow, seems true.

What is the reason? Why is Jesus of Nazareth an increasing Light, and the only Light out of Man which promises to be the Light of this world, and all others, great and greatest, of every nation and time, waning down to the ordinary gloom in which the human mind finds itself universally? Their transfiguring light, like His, arose from their own personalities, and, like His, fades into darkness. But, unlike His, the vision they gave us is growing dimmer as the years pass away, and some day, no doubt, will be extinguished. No man will see by their light any more.

The grand distinction, as we have already said, grows out of the inward transfiguration which a man has of himself. The most distinguishing characteristic of Jesus of Nazareth over all men before or after Him, is His vision of Himself, or, in ordinary terms, His consciousness of Who He *is*, the "I Am" conviction whence sprang the great

force of His life and character, Whence He has *come*, Whither He *goes*. It includes Being, and fulfils all Time. He accomplished what no other human being before or since has come near to doing, viz., He read His own and all humanity's inmost consciousness "without mistakes." "So difficult is it even for the strongest to make this primary attainment, which might seem the simplest of all, to read its own consciousness without mistakes, without errors involuntary or wilful" (Carlyle's *Burns*). When we understand all that is involved in such "reading of consciousness," in all its height and width, there will be no difficulty in solving such a problem as we have stated.

Let us, then, look at His reading of His inner consciousness. He has a consciousness of having been before all Time—before the beginning of the world: of knowing whence He has come into this world, yet not as originating in this world of Time: of knowing whither He goes, as of a course which is not conditioned in Time: and of remaining untouched and unchanged in His Being, when Heaven and Earth shall pass away. He has a consciousness of being same Being with BEING, which mankind through all ages has acclaimed by many names as Supreme Being—Absolute Being; and, most astounding of all, of all men as being on the same plane of being as Himself—"My Father and your Father, and My God and your God."

29. His Reading of Consciousness contrasted with that of other World-thinkers.

Let us also remember that while an absolute it is also a human consciousness. We shall give some of the particulars lying within it, presently. But our first impression is of vastness of vision, as if we were gazing through boundless space. By contrast, all other great thinkers, when expressing in their world-famous works that which lies within themselves, preserve for our acceptance such *conceptions* as that they are "personalities," "individuals," "subjects"; and they never surpass, or seek to carry their thought beyond "objects," "entities," limited "souls," "spirits"; or, in general, "things" which we call by a name, a number, or "quality." Hebrew Religion, Greek Philosophy, the Creeds of Christendom, and the enormous area of the modern field of Intelligence, in all its colossal magnitude, never step outside of these "categories" or ultimate *conceptions* of *the All* that exists. The idea, the judgment-form, is their limit. The consciousness of Jesus knows no such limits. His consciousness transcends *all* categories; surpasses *all* forms and boundaries; and Thought itself becomes engulfed in it. It is absolute *consciousness* of Being: the unlimited "I Am" consciousness, into which part, difference, or relationship cannot intrude.

Now, this view of His inmost Being assumes that He had pursued the same course of self-contemplation which the world's wisest have practised, and reflected profoundly upon His own nature in

order to KNOW HIMSELF. And it is because He knew Himself in that inmost light which knows no darkness, limit or form, firsts or lasts, concepts or percepts, that His light is still the same yesterday and to-day, and gives the fullest promise of being forever. After the manner of all the great minds of historical fame, He accompanied them to the same heights of the same mountain, was transfigured to men as they have been, but, unlike them, He turned from such imperfect transfiguration, and, as we have tried to show, sought the absolute transfiguration by the unseen heights of that "Way Out," that "Exodus," through suffering, self-sacrifice, and death, which was accomplished "at Jerusalem." They all have kept within the limits of Day and Night, Light and Darkness, Life and Death, One and Many, Thought, Feeling, and Willing, perceptions and conceptions; whereas, as we have said, He passed beyond *all* relativity, and in His consciousness of His Being, found a Day that knows no related Night, Life which is above and beyond our life and death, Being which is independent of the being of the Universe, and Personality which takes into itself, as Space does the Universe, all personalities as well as all impersonalities.

30. Knowing "Self" and the Universe Contemporaneously.

"Know Thyself" was the wisest word of past time, and is still the wisest word the world hears. It is an ordeal, indeed, which no one can possibly

escape, if he rise at all into conscious existence in this sphere of Time. The little child, for example, finds it the sole occupation of its earliest years—how to *know* the world around it, to walk, to talk, to comport itself towards its bewildering circumstances. The greatest and wisest only carry the quest of thus knowing themselves out into a larger area and a more complex survey, and, of course, through a more prolonged vista of experience. In the deepest sense, it is laid upon all that exists so to *ask*, to *seek*, and to *knock*, in order that it may be given unto them. And the quest is always simultaneously as much "within" as "without." As we advance in thus knowing *ourselves*, we accomplish the double result of also knowing, simultaneously, *the Universe.* And there is never any pause in the process, while life is given, until something like absolute knowledge of both "self" and the "universe" is reached. Knowledge then fades into an absolute consciousness of Reality; or, knowledge and consciousness, like the river in the ocean, yield no verge of division. They both then say "I AM" with one voice.

And, therefore, we find that Jesus, though living, thinking, teaching, and acting on the ordinary levels of human experience, always passes beyond this limit, and of all limits, and constantly equates His Being with all that the Universe is. Whatever really *is*, *that* He is. Even His "personality" is given up in such an absolute synthesis of Being. All that Science, Philosophy, and Religion have claimed as their especial and particular "spheres,"

He encloses within His conscious "I AM." "I AM," again, He equates with "the Way," "the Truth," "the Life," "the Vine," "the Bread," "the Door," "the Stone" (Mark xii. 10), "the Good Shepherd," "the Father," "the Resurrection," all which may be taken as representative of the Universe. But in the still widening and upward overflowing of His consciousness of Himself, He transcends conceptions and takes us beyond the thinkable when He says He is "All Power in heaven and earth," and completely bursts all Objectivity and Relativity in affirming that He IS when heaven and earth have passed away! This is an absolute consciousness of both Himself and the Universe. And its sole content, remaining for our consciousness, is pure Space. His personality, then, cannot be determined as *not* space. It is thus absolute illumination or transfiguration. The "nothing" character usually ascribed to space affirms itself as IS-Being—Absolute Being; for it cannot be negated though it negates all else; and nothing less than this consciousness equates with the consciousness of Jesus in His affirmation of What He is.

31. Does our Space-Consciousness give Void- or Whole-Value to Being?

Now, it is this consciousness which all the philosophers, ancient and modern, have strongly asserted to be nothing more than *null* in value. Hegel, for example, hardly exhausts his cornucopia of contempt for this consciousness of Being. Plato found exactly a null value in it and no more. It

was mere "Chaos" and "Gap"!—Vacuity! For World-Philosophy, of which these two names are representative, modern and ancient, has always presupposed that the Absolute must come in some *Form*, that is, *form of thought* at least. Whereas such a consciousness of absolute experience of Himself as Jesus found, is as absolutely *formless* as space. World-Philosophy, as we venture to think, has mis-read human consciousness.

The everlasting quest has also been for a form of *Unity* in it, and no Unity is ever discoverable there. Jesus never found real Unity in Himself, although He adopted for teaching purposes that convenient *concept*-unity of personality which is common to all literature and everyday life. For, of course, He constantly addressed men in the terms to which they were accustomed. He was bound, indeed, to teach them from the bottom level of the Null-consciousness of their common thoughts. The absolute consciousness must take in this content of mind also.

Now our consciousness always testifies that for our origin, as for our end, Space-Being alone is given in it. It is on the basis of this fact that Jesus was both First and Last, Man in the lowest and God in the Highest. "To explain the *origin* of a man is utterly to annihilate him" (F. H. Bradley). In other words, in such an explanation we find, like the men of Emmaus with Jesus, a consciousness of Space alone left for What-He-is. And World-Philosophy has steadfastly refused to identify this consciousness of Space as the consciousness of Real-

Being, either for man or universe. It has likewise refused as steadfastly to identify this same consciousness as consciousness of "God" or Supreme Being. On the contrary, Jesus, in His consciousness of absolute Being, asserts the *same* consciousness as identical for both Man and God. *It is absolute experience.* "But," says Philosophy again (F. H. Bradley), "an absolute experience for us, emphatically could be *nothing*." Most true! That is, it would be *space*, and Bradley assumes that this space is absolute nullity! And this is the false value put upon this consciousness. For this "nothing" consciousness is the true account which is given us of what we are and of what is the Universal All of Being; a true consciousness of Space-Being; our own being transfigured in Whole-Being and Whole-Value.

32. Space, Nature, Substance. Appeal to Consciousness Alone.

Jesus Himself always assumes that all that befell Him, and all that He said and did, lay wholly within the region of human understanding—"If I say the Truth, why do ye not believe me?" "Do ye not yet understand?" Many such expressions give more than hints of His attitude of thought. He certainly professed to reveal, and never to conceal. He shrank from the occult and mysterious. He asserts Himself to be, even in the absolute sense, the Light of Man, the Light of the world.

The ground of our argument, then, can be stated in a sentence. We find all the wonders of Jesus' existence on earth perfectly natural and reasonable

when we extend the meaning of "Nature" to include Space, and Space to mean qualityless Substance, or Absolute Reality. This is what neither Science, Philosophy, nor Religion has done hitherto. And we believe we are justified in making this request from thinking men by the fact that Space is claimed in our consciousness as *Being*, and not merely as Vacuity. Our higher Reason maintains that *Nature* extends beyond our thought, or the limitations which scientific thought has given to it, and is affirmed by consciousness as Boundless, or Absolute.

For "Nature," in all systems of human thought, is merely the Cosmos, the Universe, Unit-Existence, the *Total* of energy known and calculable, or supposed so to be, with Space left out of the data of such a judgment, and then valued as "Void." Space is not *Being* in such systems, and has no value as *Substance* in any sense. Space, that is, is never within the term "Nature."

Assuming now that the Master is right in believing that there is *nothing* hid but shall be made known, we ask as introductory towards this result, What is the true meaning of Substance? Let us try first the dictionary. We are told that the word itself is "from Latin *substantia*, from *substare*, to be under or present, to stand firm—*sub*, under, plus *stare*, to stand"; "that which underlies all outward manifestations"; "*the permanent subject or cause of phenomena, whether material or spiritual*"; "that which is real, in distinction from that which is apparent"; "that which constitutes anything what it is; nature; real or existing essence" (Webster). So far the word allows us

to go. We ask now, Upon what *ground* did thinking men attach such definitions to the word *Substance*? Is there anything in the heavens or in the earth, or in the waters under the earth, which answers to such definitions? The psychology of the Master declares in answer, "Heaven and earth shall pass away." The ancients also declared that "All flows." Where, then, is the "permanence" which justifies the existence of such *Substance?* And if not permanent, it cannot be finally Real, nor underlie all outward manifestations, nor be "cause of heaven and earth, and all phenomena." Is it not clear that we are forced outside of so-called "Nature" to seek for this Substance? And this means that the definitions of the dictionary have been affirmed on the basis of a consciousness in men alone, and not upon anything realisable through thought or sense, or our sensibility. *The* appeal therefore is to our consciousness—from which it is evident that the nearer we seek to come to Reality, we must more and more leave all thoughts of "Matter" behind us. And Science has amply illustrated this process in leaving not only the fire, air, earth, water of the ancients behind her, but also such things as atoms, vortices, molecules, ions, or electrons, to reach that which can only be placed in thought as *Matterless Energy.* Thought, that is, becomes more and more dematerialised in advancing towards that *Real* which consciousness affirms insistently, and is solely to be found in consciousness.

33. Absolute Affirmation of Substance in our "I"-Consciousness.

Are we really conscious, then, of *anything* answering to these definitions? And following again the psychology of the Master, we find that there *is*, viz., His affirmation, "I AM." When heaven and earth passed away, He would not pass. All phenomena would vanish, but not What He was. This would underlie "all outward manifestations"; "stand firm"; and be the "permanent subject." And all else having passed away, this "I" would remain the only "subject" that could be. This would also abide as *sole* "subject" without any "object" over against it. The affirmation "Is," in this "I Am," is consequently absolute Being. Is not *this* the "Substance" we seek? Consciousness attests such Being as permanent and concrete.

We find that we also have the same consciousness regarding our own affirmation of Being, as "I," which Jesus expressed for what *He* was. *There is nothing of which we are so certain of being substance as What we are.* But we are not conscious of possessing any of the "qualities" which are usually ascribed to scientific "substance," nor can we therefore *think* What we are. We are only *conscious* that we are. And this is our highest certainty.

We must again, however, observe at this point, that we stand outside of "Nature" in this consciousness of our Being. For all that is included within that term is qualifiable. As with the Master, we find that the affirmation "IS" in our "I AM" is

absolute. It has no limitations for either conception or consciousness.

Now the reader may be inclined to hesitate over that statement. For the associations of the term "substance" persist in his thoughts as "something," and if something, then this substance must exist *in* Space. It cannot therefore be Sole Being, or absolute. There must be this Substance *and* Space!

This confusion is due to the usual associations of the term "substance." We have to try to discern that when we say "I," "substance" as a definition confesses its inefficiency, and disappears with all the phenomena of "heaven and earth." The Space Fact alone abides. The consciousness of Space still remains in our inmost experience when all other terms vanish. *Space precedes all else*, say, i.e., is independent of time, and also abides, confessing Being, when all else is gone. For when we have admitted that "Heaven and earth shall pass away," Space claims to be that Being into which they so pass. For Science truly asserts that nothing can be destroyed in the universe. And, as Kant found, we cannot abstract this consciousness of Space from *what* we are, though all "phenomena" may be so abstracted. *And in reality, we thus discern that our truest consciousness of "Substance" is our consciousness of Space.* And thus we also discern that just because Space *is* Substance, nothing *can* be destroyed. Space asserts Being against every possible negation.

It is therefore *as* this absolute value that we must regard the "I AM" of Jesus, as well as the "I am" of ourselves. For both His consciousness and our

own affirm that What-we-are has greater value than Heaven and Earth. As He put it, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own life (soul)?" A comparison which can be extended to All that exists, with the same result. Moreover, heaven and earth come under quantitative limits, whereas quality and quantity are inadmissible within the "I am" consciousness.

34. Consciousness of Space a Consciousness of Uncaused Being.

But this "IS" affirmation means more for Space than it does for the Universe or "Nature." For nothing in that vastitude of "forces" and "energies" claims to be real for itself, or to have *caused* itself. Everything in Nature points away from itself to some Reality beyond itself as its *Cause.* Space alone affirms Being in itself. "Is," "I am," is its supreme idiom, and nothing else speaks so. It is our consciousness of Sole Being.

With such a consciousness regarding Space, therefore, and also of Space, say, as antecedent to all else, and also in reality absolutely permanent Being, we should expect to be able to say that Space is sole *Cause* of All. However, let us first ask, Have we a consciousness that Space may have been itself caused? No, we answer, this is an absolutely impossible consciousness. The human mind does not furnish us with the faintest capacity of thinking so. IS, is the sole possible consciousness. Consequently, the conception of *Creation* and causation falls away from Space. For its "Creator" could not be conceived without an

antecedent consciousness of space for *Him*, and thus the consciousness of Space must always be uncreated Being to us. And this means that Space is not Unit-Being but Whole. For "One" means that which is surrounded by space, and is limited in space. No more is Space "*Total*-Being," for a total is just "One" conceived with a greater content. Space is Sole, or rather, Whole-Being, inconceivable as *caused* or *created*.

35. Space Absolute and Space of "Dimensions."

It must be very evident, also, that the "Space" of our argument is far removed from the "space of three dimensions," or space of any dimensions, the space, *i.e.*, which is measurable *Quantity*. Such space of dimensions is a pure construction of the human mind, a conception, and more properly to be called "length" or "distance" between two points, which points are themselves first created in the mind. For the human mind, having first completely isolated itself as One from all other Ones, naturally isolates everything else connected with it. Hence, in perceiving objects through the senses, it is supposed that we are doing an act which is quite isolated from the conception which we form of it in our judgment. Mind, to start with, is assumed to be isolated from Matter. *Then*, no force of imagination can "overcome such difference"! In reality there is no such difference in actual Being. For space is fundamentally necessary to both "Mind" and "Matter." Both are separated in our judgment only, which takes no account of Space-Being, much as red is

divided from violet in the one pencil of light as it passes through the prism. *Consciousness always finds a deeper nexus than either perception or conception*, as psychology creates them, and affirms them whole, in the illimitable space-energy, "I." Perceptions and conceptions are simply forms, and only forms, of the "I" as it expresses Being-Affirmation.

36. Space covers Everything which we can think to be.

Space, then, being Whole-Being, includes all the other "Being" of our ordinary conceptive thoughts and judgments. Undoubtedly. But we should be careful how we conceive this matter. For Space is never conceivable as *a* Cause, which, in its own essence, we must think of as isolatedly apart from the "others" in being. Space does not cause, or create, other beings as things of different being from Space-Being. Consequently we have to consider *Cause* as we considered *Substance*, viz., as Space-Being, and qualityless.

It is we who create apartness and difference in our minds, by *judging* that the Space which is not divisible from any being is "void," and of no account as *being* at all. Just as if one should take a part of the Ocean, call it a drop, and invest it with independent being, then again, put it back into the Ocean and say, "It has no being." Similarly, we usually judge all the "individuals," and "things" immeasurable and innumerable in heaven and earth, to be apart-things (Space being ignored in our judgment as a nullity for the time), and then

imagine that some Unknown Being has created them so. This is the illusion of our Thought which wrests a part out of the Ocean-Whole, names it "One," "Individual," "Thing," different being from Space, and then asserts that it will remain so itself to all eternity! To such a Thought, Space is the absolute Nonentity. Whereas, the imperishable truth remains, viz., that such "One," "Individual," or "Thing," must verily be *in* Space, as we phrase it, *before* we can think or believe it *to be* at all. It depends absolutely on Space-Being for any being with which our thought and judgment can invest it. And in this respect the analogy of the branch and the tree, rather than the terms *Cause* and *Effect*, would help us nearer to the fact of its being. There is no difference of being there, only of Form; nor is there any difference of being in the extended view of branch, tree, earth, air, and boundless Space-Being. We, in our thoughts and judgments, generalise, and create, and count, and divide, and *make horizons*, and qualify by *conceptions*, and conceive *totals* and *quantities* at will, but we do not differentiate *Being* in any sense thereby, nor are we ever able to convert our *consciousness* to the vagaries of our space-less *conceptions* and ideas.

37. "I"-Consciousness not a Consciousness of Unit-Being.

We find this out speedily enough when we apply such generalisations of the human mind to our consciousness for verification. "*Cogito, ergo sum*," said Descartes—"I think, therefore I am." He asserted

that Being was verified by our Thought—the never-changing by the ever-changing. And this position Modern Philosophy has not ceased yet to respect. Hegel said that Descartes' statement is the "maxim on which may be said to hinge the whole interest of Modern Philosophy." This view of What-we-are has consequently created the judgment that our "I AM" is a "Self" quite alone and distinct by itself, and different from all other "Selfs." It is "One." "God" is another "One." The heavens and the earth are full of "ones." The Universe is also "One," as is also "Nature." Inevitably, then, Science, Philosophy, and Religion are compelled to form their colossal systems on this fundamental notion of Unit-Being. And no Unit-Being can be conceived as including Space-Being. For it is impossible, as already said, to enclose Space in that or any conception. We never can get all round Space to verify or think its one-ness. It has no limitations. Therefore, in these three vast structures of the human mind, Space is left out of both consciousness and conception, and Truth is therefore not an absolute in either.

But are we really conscious of our "I" being only "one"? Can we put such limits upon what we are? We try first, "I am *man*." We judge that our consciousness verifies our manhood or womanhood. Does it? We are conscious of a "mortal part" as we name it, but consciousness declares the "I" as more than heaven and earth. We then say, "If we are not 'Matter,' we are 'Mind.'" But consciousness again refuses to verify it. For the "I" speaks of

"*my* mind" as a possession, and a valuable one, but still "mine." Therefore, as we see, Descartes' "I" was not in the same plane of consciousness with his "think." His "I am thinking" simply verified his *thinking*, but not the being of his conscious "I" in any sense. But indeed this consciousness needs no verification, as by any witnesses to its truth. The Master's psychology was the best—"Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness *is* true." It is self-evident truth, or Truth Absolute. No negation can meet its affirmation of being.

This is plainer when we come to ascertain the actual content of the conscious "I." What can we really find in it? Philosophers of old averred that the fundamental consciousness of *What-we-are* is *tabula rasa*, an unfortunate term, because our conscious "I" never presents a surface. Bare *surface*, with nothing on it that could be be-gripped by a thought!—an objectless vista without end! Hume made the same confession. "I never can catch myself," he said. Plato looked earnestly and bravely to find a resting-place for his thought in his "I," but left the impression with most people that he found only "Ideas" there, and the "Gap" which he called "Chaos." But he clung to the "Ideas" and left "Chaos" to itself! It was negligible! Yet his *ultimate* consciousness was of "Gap," or Space. But he refused to build anything upon that foundation! He must be able to *conceive* his foundation!

38. Testimony of Great Writers to the Space-Consciousness as Negation.

Modern philosophers, like Plotinus, make the "personality" the key of their systems. But each and all of them find their consciousness of that entity one of *blankness*, wherein lodges, as they suppose, the unit-being we call "Self." The ultimate consciousness is of Space, but they identify this as "negation," or "nullity," and imagine that the "Self" must be beyond this. As Pascal put it, "All things arise from nothing, and tend towards the infinite." So Principal John Caird: "Philosophy, along with other things, comes to an end, in a principle which reduces all thought and being to Nothingness." And Carlyle: "Metaphysical speculation, as it begins in No or Nothingness, so it must needs end in Nothingness." The late Dr Sanday of Oxford, among his last words, wrote, "It requires an effort to realise, truism as it is, that to write the history of religion we have to begin with a *tabula rasa*." "Religion begins with a blank. But everything begins with a blank." The same or similar expressions are found in the works of Spinoza, Kant, and Hegel. The consciousness of *What-we-are* is one of Space. And against the assertion of our consciousness of its absolute value, *they* assign it the value of "utter negation." If we try to find in it the substance of our "Self," Hegel assures us that "Substance, as the universal negating power, is, as it were, *a dark, shapeless abyss*!" And this "abyss" is valued in the judgments of these writers, as—

Absolute Null! In their *judgments* they impose upon this consciousness an absolutely negative value. Yet, wonderful enough, since the days of Plotinus, all the philosophers designate the "I" as ONE; as unit-being—an isolated "Self"! Being beyond all thought or conception, they yet dare to define it in a *conception* of One-ness! Of course, it is a pure guess in that case. And the same has to be said of their *conception* of "negation," "nullity," "valuelessness," with which they qualify it. Was not the Master's psychology the Truth?—"*Deny* Self." Abandon the "personality" of the *conceptions*. Be "nothing," and, through giving *all* away, *be* all. Receive the child and receive Me; receive Me and receive Him that sent Me. Being to Him is not isolated, but Whole, with no "difference" in its consciousness of itself. The seed, to appearance, falls into the ground and dies, but in reality, through its "nothingness," it lives the higher and fuller fruitful life. Heaven and earth pass away in Space, only through their "nothingness" to be renewed in new Existence. Our judgments on "personality" pass away with the processes of our thoughts, but what we *are* changeth never.

CHAPTER V

39. Space affirmed to be Same Being with "I"-Being.

OUR ultimate consciousness, then, of What-we-are, is Space, just as we have seen Absolute *Substance* and Absolute *Cause* to be. We may call it Soul, Spirit, Ego, Self, Mind, Reason, Thought, Psychosis, or anything else that pleases better. Every name is false to its truth, and only serves to cover up our ignorance of the actual "Blank." For everything which we say of this conscious "I," we can say of Space, and *vice versa*: a statement quite as true of the term "God."

And remembering that our "*consciousness never deceives*," as Hume said, and that it is made, by all thinkers worth the name, to be their criterion or ultimate test of Truth, we discover thereby a few marvellous facts which are essential to our right light upon Universal Existence.

I. We cannot think What-we-are and Space to be different in Being. The "Blank" is, "within" us and "without" us, the same "Blank." And at first this view seems terrible in its "negation." For Universal Space is counted, as said above, simply Vacuity—the great Null! But we stand by our

consciousness *as affirming against every possible "negation,"* first, that We *Are*, and second, that What-we-are thinks, feels, wills, lives, loves, etc., etc., and instead of levelling ourselves down to the dead Space which philosophers have maligned as "Vacuity," immeasurable and unspeakable, we are compelled, with the facts given us in our consciousness, to adjudge this same Space to the same Being of which *we as Space* are conscious, viz., *to be true Being*, and just as *we* are, viz., as thinking, feeling, willing, living, and loving, just as *we* do. This boundless "Blank" therefore becomes the most fruitful and the most pleasant consciousness possible to us, and makes us whole-with-all-Being, both in its "Appearance" and in *That which does not appear*; both in all we think of its "Materiality" and its "Spirituality," its "Humanity" and "Divinity," its "Finiteness" and "Infiniteness," its "Being" and so-called "Non-Being." We find, in short, that in this consciousness all these "Relativities" vanish as falsities, and that the "Blank" consciousness "without" and "within" us, is the true foundation for a right *knowledge* of ourselves as whole with Universal Existence. We can also see that Religion, Science, Philosophy, and Art, have their common basis in this consciousness, and consequently are not sundered from each other in their truth of absolute being, but are only made so by conceptive creations and "systems" built upon defective psychology.

40. The Division of I-Space and Cosmic Space due to Mental Concepts.

II. It is also clear that *every conception* which is possible to the human mind must be more or less untrue, not only for ourselves but as concerning "God," "Nature," "Universe," "Time," and "Eternity." For these are *conceptions*, and are created in human judgments. Fundamentally they are all engulfed in the consciousness of our space-being which no conception can compass. Indeed, "Space," as a term for Being, is far greater and more valuable than the term "God" of our conceptions.

But at this point the reader rightly asserts that of the infinite expanse of space-being, we have no genuine consciousness of space-love, space-life, space-thought, space-feeling, space-willing, space-mind, space-matter, or space anything. Our true consciousness is solely, space-is. How, then, is our conscious "I" whole-being with this Ogre-Negation? For are we not conscious of things which we call love, life, thought, feeling, willing, matter, mind, spirit, etc., in our conscious "I"? We quote these as samples only. For psychology has broken up the "I" consciousness into very many more divisions than here given, and under her incantations we somehow believe that they *are* true *as* conceived. But we have sorrowfully to say that they are purely *divisive names of ideas* created in our judgments, and that in reality *our inward experience is never so divided into such fragments.* For example, we are never conscious of something

within us which we call "Life," as separate from another thing which we call "Spirit," or of both as distinct entities from some other thing which we call "Memory" or "Mind." We are only conscious of *Energy*, or *that which* encompasses all these fragments in what-we-are: "I." Our "thinking" is never sundered from our "feeling," nor our feeling from our "willing," nor any of these from our "soul." Psychology simply quarries these bits out of the "I," and hopes to help us to understand ourselves better by them. She makes maps of our conscious "I," as men make maps of the moon, and divides it into sections and parts for intellectual reference. *The "I" experience is never so divided in actual fact.* It is always a *conscious wholeness* with all or absolute existence, of which space-being is the most convenient term. And it is always an Is, or Energy-affirmation.

We are never conscious therefore of parts in what-we-are. Consequently, One, as a definition of what-we-are, is the abysmal impossible. It is a mere conception, although both ancient and modern philosophy have accepted it without question. On the contrary, whether we are conscious of "I" or "Space," no qualification is in the least admissible for either, save IS, viewing these as *two* for explanatory purposes. To attribute unit-being to either is to admit also the accompanying consciousness of squaring, cubing, halving, quartering, etc., to which all number is exposed.

We have no consciousness of such possibilities in our "I," all limits for such being illusive, and

creatures of judgment; and therefore we conclude that we are no more conscious of I-*love*, I-*thought*, I-*feeling*, I-*willing*, I-*spirit*, I-*anything*, than we have of space-*life*, space-*thought*, space-*feeling*, space-*willing*, space-*mind*, or space-*anything*, every one of these definitions being concepts cut out of the whole "I"- or "Space"-consciousness, which affirms to everlasting its indivisibility.

41. The Affirmation of Space-Being is Absolute or Whole-Energy.

III. But such consciousness of irresistible *affirmation of Being, Is*, so supremely beyond all our puny definitions of it, has clearly immeasurable *Energy* in itself. And the word suggests at once, *mass* and *motion.* Now, we must leave these lower concepts of science aside. In the first and last consciousness of what-we-are we are only conscious, as we must always say, of neither substance nor motion but only of space, abyss, "blank." But space asserts itself as *Being* with *an affirmation which is really infinite Force.* It is so great that it cannot be compared. It has no *Other.* It is whole-energy. It vanquishes every negation, as said above. For if any negation did exist, it would owe its existence to the affirmation Is, which is the idiom claimed alone by space. This "Energy" in the affirmation of Being, is therefore beyond scientific nomenclature. The "negations," "void," "null," and "empty," which thinkers have persistently attached to such conscious affirmation, are only measures of their imperfect judgments,

and their inability to found a concept upon it. For it spurns all such conceptive limitations.

The truth therefore is, that, simultaneous with our consciousness of what-we-are, we have consciousness of this whole-*Energy*, which is embedded in the space-consciousness. The reflective mind then draws portions from it in the shape of *ideas, concepts judgments*, such as will, cause, etc., and names one part Bodily Energy, Mental Energy, Spiritual Energy, etc., which are again split up into life-energy, thought-energy, sensation-energy, will-energy, which again subdivide into such entities as "attention," "memory," and many other "faculties," as Kant called them. But what we must rigidly bear in mind is the truth that *all these conceptions and terms are inventions of psychologists and philosophers, and that the genuine consciousness we do possess is of indivisible energy arising out of the primary "I"-affirmation of Being*, energy which no other can possibly resist, reduce, or annihilate, although every energy known to science, in the Cosmos, along with heaven and earth, can be resisted and pass away. For the "abyss" within as for the "abyss" without, the same facts consist together. Mankind, in a similar way, cuts up the fulness of the absolute affirmation, Space-IS, into conceptive *Forces* which are named Gravitation, Conservation, Cohesion, Chemical, Electric, etc., all or each of which never exhausts the Is-affirmation enveloped in Being, of which Space is our sole idiom.

The "differences," therefore, which men have asserted to exist within the affirmation spheres of

Being, "Space," and "I" (counting them two for purposes of understanding), and as between such "two" themselves, are arbitrary, and due solely to the conceptive judgments of the human dialectic. Universal Space has been designated "empty" and "dead"—mere "chaos" or gap; and consequently, all "energy" and "motions" in space have been credited with "death" likewise, and as of no use to, and absolutely severed from, the "spirit" of man. And thus, as man accounted himself as alive, spiritual, and all his motions as vital, loving, etc., he also judged himself as infinitely separated from this infinite sphere of infinite "Matter," "Death," and abysmal "Negation"! He being judged by himself as Real, Space, as judged to be at the opposite extreme from himself, could be no other than the true Unreal!

42. Energy is Whole in the Is-Affirmation, but being Sole Energy is Unknowable by Resistance.

We are wiser to take the Great Master's psychology as the only truth in these matters, and humbly follow His Light of Man and of the World. We shall then understand better why He addressed all without Him, as all within, as Same-Being; speaking to sea, storms, trees, stones, mountains, and the very "dead" corpses, not as being under death, negation, nullity, and emptiness, or separative existence, but as fundamentally capable of willing, obeying, thinking, etc., even as man is himself. *He never put any "being" on a lower plane of Being than He put Himself.*

It is in consonance with this consciousness in Him that He could say, although to all appearance the weakest of men, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth." It arose from the immeasurable consciousness of His "I"-Affirmation. We ourselves have also this same consciousness of weakness and infinite strength combined under our "I"-affirmation. We move our limbs with energy, but it is energy inseparable from thought-energy, will-energy, etc., just as thought-energy, will-energy, etc., are inseparable from the "I"-energy. And we have just shown that such "I"-energy is outside of all possible measurements or calculations of Science, being abysmal-, or "blank-," or space-energy, true infinite energy, the "ALL-Power" of the Master's consciousness. It was this same consciousness which fired St Paul: "O Death, where is thy victory?" and carried him to the high conception that Death was "abolished," while yet compelled to confess "the body of this death" as still with him.

And there seems to be no doubt that the "motions" of limb, and mind, which recede into the "energy" of the "I"-affirmation infinitely, are not different from the "motions" in the universe which we characterise as material, gravitational, electrical, etherial, etc., which recede similarly into Space-Being. Yet, for both Space and our "I," we have not the remotest consciousness of Motion, for the simple reason that *the affirmatory energy of Being passes beyond perception, conception, and thought itself.* The last judgment in us is never qualifying, but

purely existential: "I." The I-affirmation, being Sole Energy, cannot be known by resistance.

43. Scientific "Motion" and "Space" are Quantitative, not Absolutes.

However, in so thinking, we should guard our judgment from being warped by the restrictive meaning of "motion" as science designs it. For scientifically, in the very heart of it, *mass* is implied, and *space between two points*, within which motion takes place. Now both "mass" and this "space" are mentally created things, and are quantitative, which cannot be said of Space-Being or the "I." Consequently, what we describe as "Motion," either within or without, whether in "I" or Space, is not due to separated "things" or to "empty" space lying between them, across which they must pass to meet. They are clearly due to the absolute affirmation of absolute Being, never separate from anything, but which, like the partitioned-out "motions" of our body, mind, and spirit, are cut into the fragmentary concepts, Gravitation, Cohesion, Electricity, etc., etc. No motion of *body* is independent of Space; no motion of *mind* is independent of Space; no motion of *spirit* is independent of Space. The "I"-consciousness is itself consciously Space, and *the consciousness which we have of scientific "motion" is due*, as we have said, *to conceptive judgments carved out of the absolute affirmation of Being*, much as we carve circles in the air by whirling a cane or a torch. If the "motions" were *absolutely* real,

and maintained the absolute affirmation of *separate* Being, we should never have them rising or falling, coming or going, weakening or increasing, appearing and disappearing. Such qualifications cannot be made concerning an Absolute.

The "motions" of our limbs, and minds, are therefore *conceptive forms* of the I-Affirmation, in which we have no consciousness of scientific "motion" at all, but without which there could be no concepts formed of either motion of mind or motion of body. Concepts move, they come and go, but Consciousness does not move. We might liken it to the tree whose leaves and branches are all in motion while its root is motionless, but without which no motion in leaf or branch could take place. It is similar with all the "motions" of the Universe and Space. We cannot predicate either *rest* or *motion* of Space, or of "I am," but we are conscious that no motion *could* occur in the Universe without Space. And therefore, as with the affirmation of "I" in all mental and material "motions," so in Space every "motion" in the Cosmos is never without the absolute affirmation of Space as concurrent with our consciousness of it. *It is therefore in our I, or Space-consciousness, and not in any of the "energies" or "motions" of scientific nomenclature, that we possess our deepest realisation of "All-Power."* And in this sense, it is given to all men as well as to Jesus to have a consciousness of possessing all power in heaven and earth, although as concerns the body we may feel weak enough, just as He did. That is to say, Space is Whole-Energy: pure consciousness unmediated by resistance.

44. The I-Consciousness knows no "Death" or "Life," "Past" or "Present."

It is thus evident that as we pass beyond the sphere in which we can conceive and perceive the "Forms" which make up for us all what we call Existence, that is, when we are dead, we enter more and more into an experience of our being which knows no divisions of life and death, and is fuller and infinitely deeper than anything given to us in our concepts of our being. The I-consciousness, throwing aside all conceptive limitations such as "life" and "death," realises its wholeness with what we call "Cosmic" Space, but which is never so limited in reality. Hence, also, there is no more Time. We cannot discover time in our I-consciousness, any more than "life" or "spirit" or "motion," and consequently, for us as for Jesus, the expressions "Before Abraham was, I am," "Before the world was," and similar affirmations of consciousness, are equally truthful. All that comes under the category of Time is only conceptive, but is in no wise in truth with our consciousness. And behind all that Jesus says we discern that everything that includes the conception of "Process," such as all "motions," "Evolution," "Duration," "Time," are relegated by Him to the limitations of human thought and knowledge, and are all to be extinguished in our Space- or I-consciousness. And there being no Time in Space, a consciousness of Everlastingness or "Eternity" alone remains within us.

45. Truth of Consciousness and Truth of Conceptive Thought.

Perhaps it is now clearer to us that the difference between Truth of Consciousness and Truth of Thought is that between Whole-Truth and Phase-of-Truth. Also that it is the ever-widening of Truth-of-Consciousness throughout world-Thought that gives us the sense of *Process* in the Cosmos, and which the human mind differentiates into motions, and generalises as Evolution, Transfiguration, Gravitation, etc. For all the facts of "Nature" revealed in Time have never been absent from Space-Being either within or without us, although they were not to be found in human thought. Newton but reached up higher in the Truth-of-Consciousness, and threw a wider lasso of generalising thought into Space-Being, but did not thereby exhaust the everlasting reservoir (as Einstein seems to have proved), which was, is, and shall be when innumerable Newtons and Einsteins have still further extended the horizons of human mentality through countless ages. So is it with regard to the "relations" so-called between Man, Cosmos, and God, and all the other postulates of positive or scientific thought. They are *processional horizons* which are ever changing. The Truth of all we call Civilisation, Science, Religion, Philosophy, and Art, was always *within* our Truth of Consciousness, or Truth of Space-Being—a consciousness of absoluteness so profound as to give no hint whatever that our capacity to Know may end.

46. The Transfiguration is natural by the Space-consciousness.

We feel justified accordingly in maintaining that these facts of our Space-consciousness explain the naturalness of common space which existed for all the *persons* involved in the Transfiguration, "mortal and immortal," and also the evident absence of all division between "living" and "dead," time "past" and time "present." The Transfiguration was in perfect harmony with the I-affirmation in us all, viz., that Being is whole absolutely, and not an endless congeries of separated entities, persons, and times.

CHAPTER VI

47. "As He was Praying the fashion of His countenance was altered."

We return now to the means or path by which this transfiguration is effected for mankind. We speak of such means as "Research," "Enquiry," "Demonstration and verification," "Expansion of the sum of human knowledge," "Progress of Mind," and such like, and then proudly suppose that men verily *create* the light which increases through such exercises. Some generalise these currents of mental effort into one, and name it curiosity, wonder, etc. But fundamentally, such increase of light, or transfiguration of human nature from the lowest to the highest of itself, is brought about by the same process as Jesus experienced on the Mount, viz., *by Prayer*—"As He was praying." And this directs us back to the *energy* upon which all world-movements rest, ultimately, no matter by what name we designate them, viz., *the energy of the affirming "I Am."* The energy that affirms Being, Is, I, Space, *sans* motion or matter, becomes conscious to us, and then, in our perceptions and conceptions, seems to split up into all "motions" and "matters," through such reasoning.

We only *create* these forms for ourselves out of

the whole-consciousness of the I-energy, which is illimitable as space-being. As said above, Jesus defined these forms as "asking," "seeking," "knocking," and all asking, seeking, knocking, or, as we say, all enquiry, research, and investigation, as exemplified in Science, Art, Philosophy, and Religion, is at bottom true Prayer. And it is by this means of prayer that all illumination of things human or divine, earthly or heavenly, is brought about in rational experience, and consequently, a genuine transfiguration of all both "within" and "without" us.

No doubt, under the human impulses and judgments which sectionalise everything, we reserve the term "prayer" only for sacred uses. But Jesus, while He taught the narrower, familiar form, "Our Father," etc., also gave to prayer the field of the absolute for its activity: "Ask, and it shall be given you, Seek, and ye shall find, Knock, and it shall be opened unto you." He does not limit the asking to any object, as to any God; nor does He confine the seeking to any mediatorial agency, as to a priest; nor is the knocking to be concerned solely with any subject. Whole-Being has no such limitation, and is destitute of all Form. For this reason, the field of prayer, in the consciousness of Jesus, is wide as the universe and the consciousness of Man; and, obeying its best instincts, the universal human intellect has uttered prayer through every sense and every thought, in exploring every subject; and thus, as a result, all Civilisation and all Religions are due to Prayer. The world has been slowly illumined and transfigured, by prayer of this absolute nature—

prayer which ever urges the realisation of Man's absolute being.

48. Prayer the Deepest Movement in Consciousness.

Prayer is thus shown by Jesus, both in His acts and teaching, to be the prince of methods in man. It is the deepest movement in Consciousness. And the long upward course of improvement and progress in the history of the human race, amply vindicates His statement of the *certainty* of result in prayer: "For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." And all such prayer *unfailingly transfigures* not only man but his attitude to the Universe.

For, in the widest sense, to live is to pray. His words, "I know that Thou (Father) hearest me always," not only suggest that He Himself lived in constant prayer, but that He believed that all prayer is heard. "Ask," for Space-Absolute is not the dead vacuous abstraction of the philosophers. Space is an EAR that hears. "Seek," for the Unbounded WAY is living and everlasting. "Knock," for the universal ALL, enveloping Man and Nature, responds and Opens. "There is *nothing* hid that shall not be made manifest and come to light." *Jesus abhorred mystery:* "I have spoken openly to the world . . . in secret spake I nothing." Was not He "the Light of the world"? the transfigurer of both Man and the Universe?

Necessity, indeed, is laid upon man to pray. What he *is* compels him to do so in order to arrive at the

truth of himself, or to bring his Thought into full identity with his Consciousness. Want is the power behind all prayer. And nothing in the Cosmos or in the attainments of the human mind satisfies man's consciousness for long as to the conceptive truth of himself. All his conceptions fall far short. All his "systems" finally prove deceptive. Jesus alone stands forth as satisfying the prayer of scientist, philosopher, and religionist, in that He has gone furthest in praying, until He surpassed all prayer as a method of illumination and transfiguration (John xvi. 26-7). In the boundless, wide-open consciousness of what He was, as equated with Space-Being, all limits of even "personality" vanished for Him, and He could say, "I and the Father are One-Being," a consciousness which He still further transcended in its affirmation of Unity, by the absolute "I AM," in which there is no hint of even "I Am *One*" or "I Am *Man*," or "I Am *anything*." "*I AM*" *is a Spatial affirmation*, and no conception, and no consciousness, we possess of even "God" yields us more. (See the author's *Space and Personality*, Index.)

49. Transfiguration of all Relative Terms for God-Being.

We have thus to distinguish in Jesus, as in ourselves, a consciousness which all our conceptions are inadequate to satisfy to the full, and to learn from Him that prayer is an urgement under this relationless space-consciousness arising out of such inadequacy. There is a universal tendency, for

example, to *concrete* all our conceptions with everlasting permanency, until the irrepressible consciousness of absolute being in us, by asking, seeking, and knocking, proves their temporality, and demands their abolition.

Prayer compels in this way a certain *gradation of conception* for the human mind; a gradation which recedes ultimately into consciousness absolute. But as a rule men little understand Christ's absolute vision of Existence, and place His thoughts among their thoughts and His ways among their ways. When He speaks of Himself as "Son of Man," or "Son of God," we are deluded into concluding that He has thereby exhausted His absolute consciousness of Who-He-Is by so defining Himself. When He speaks of "My Father," we are betrayed into thinking such a relationship as declared everlastingly permanent for Himself *and* an Other. Similarly, we attach the same value to His "Holy Spirit," and set them down in our faith and creeds as to be taken absolutely.

On the contrary, they are conceptive personalised judgments which are necessary for lifting the human mind through such graded Being-Ideas until absolute transfiguration of Whole-Being is achieved for us, as it was in Himself. Before Jesus' day, Being was conceived under such personalised conceptions as Yahvé, El, Elohim, and many others, but Jesus declared that neither the Jews nor the World had knowledge of the "Father," the conception of Being which He Himself most frequently employed. And if this conception had been absolutely sufficient He

would never have used any other. But He said "God is Spirit," and this definition of Being surpasses that of "Father." "Father" implies, in His being, Life, Sex, Time, and "Heaven and Earth," for He is Lord of them, and is also as impersonal as personal, for Jesus said He was neither flesh nor blood. But in the term "Spirit" we have no consciousness of Life, Sex, Time, or any cosmical reference. We have the same consciousness as we possess for What-we-are, in which none of these qualifications are present. Yet, again, "Spirit" has the disadvantage of not being found in our own experience of ourselves. We have solely a consciousness of Space-Affirmation in What-we-are. But it was necessary for Jesus to transcend "Father" by the word "Spirit," in order to reach for Whole-being the completer definition of the Truth of Being *as* it lies in us. And again, a higher expression than "Spirit" was also necessary, in order to render *whole* that consciousness of Being which knows no division between What-we-are and the Universe. And this term Jesus uttered in "I AM." For all and every term for Being which men have invented, and through past ages have consecrated and made holy for themselves, is summed up and surpassed in it. And it is absolutely True. We *are*. And it defines Whole-Being in that Space-Consciousness which is the same for Being as known to man and Universal Nature, covering every attribute by which we define "God."

This gradation from related towards unrelated terms for the God-Being-Idea is exemplified in

the first words of the Fourth Gospel. "In the beginning" introduces Time; "was the Word," asserts duality of Time and Word; "and the Word was with God," gives a Trinity in Being, viz., "Beginning," "Word," and "God." "And the Word was God," abolishes the duality between "Word" and "God," but not between "God" and "Time." "The *Beginning*" still exists *and* "God." Neither does the term "Father" abolish the duality, but "God is Spirit" does so, for in it we ascend to a *timeless* or Beginningless consciousness of Being. The gradation is then further perfected in the "I AM" affirmation of Whole-Being, as we have said, and this satisfies our consciousness of What-we-are to the uttermost. As Space-Being we are not conscious of a further desire of Being. And no further desire is possible. The space-consciousness exhausts all desire infinitely. Therefore, as is evident, it also exhausts all prayer. For the urgement of our consciousness of Being is realised absolutely.

Jesus, in His first Beatitude, describes this state as "poor in spirit," "utterly destitute" in *spirit*, having no consciousness save a *space*-consciousness. No possession absolutely; utter lack, for it is lack in "*spirit*." Yet this pure space-consciousness He defines as possessing Whole-Being; not a mere *part* of being, or a *share* of happiness, or a *dole* of life and blessing, but "the *Kingdom* of Heaven": Whole-Being. "Poor in spirit" He equates with "the Kingdom of Heaven."

50. Herbert Spencer's Dread of the Space-consciousness.

We must now look at another phase of our consciousness of space with reference to the attitude which thinking men have assumed towards it. *Why* have the highest minds turned continually away from this consciousness and preferred a conceptive judgment for the bases of Science, Religion, and Philosophy? We think it is on account of the appalling dread which it has hitherto inspired. Instead of finding the fulness of What- or Who-he-was in it, man has found only the Gorgon Head of blank death. *God* and *Man* and the *Universe* were absolutely divided from it! "The abyss of Nothingness," said Æschylus! "Space is . . . an empty, lifeless element," Hegel said. And Cardinal Newman—

> "Down, down forever I was falling through
> The solid framework of created things,
> And needs must sink and sink
> Into the Vast Abyss."
>
> *Dream of Gerontius.*

Tennyson declared, "If God were to withdraw Himself for one single instant from this Universe, everything would vanish into Nothingness"—an unspeakable calamity, evidently!

In his *Summer* (line 333), Thomson says—

> "Has any seen
> The mighty chain of beings, lessening down
> From infinite perfection to the brink
> Of dreary Nothing—desolate Abyss,
> From which astonished thought, recoiling, turns?"

This is the Space from which Herbert Spencer shrank in his contemplation or consciousness of it, as too overpoweringly awful for human thought to entertain. He says—

"There is one aspect of the great enigma *to which little attention seems given*, but which has of late years more frequently impressed me. I refer to . . .—the phenomena of Space" . . . "Theist and Agnostic must agree in recognising the properties of space as *inherent*, *eternal*, *uncreated—as anteceding all Creation*, if creation has taken place, and *all Evolution*, if evolution has taken place." "Space has no beginning. The thought of this blank form of existence, which, explored in all directions as far as imagination can reach, has, beyond that, an unexplored region compared with which the part which imagination has traversed is but infinitesimal —the thought of a space compared with which our immeasurable sidereal system dwindles to a point, is a thought too overwhelming to be dwelt upon. Of late years the consciousness that, *without origin or cause*, *infinite space* has ever existed and must ever exist, produces in me a feeling from which I shrink" (*Facts and Comments*, 1902. Italics ours).

This strong spirit, asking, seeking, knocking, or *praying*, as was his wont, for more light on the highest problems of human existence, is led directly and inevitably to this ultimate consciousness of Space. How could he escape this result if his prayer was to be answered? There is no other way to absolute light. But although it is perfectly evident by his dread that he has no

doubt that Space is *real Being*, and that space gives to his consciousness of it every character, quality, or attribute, by which he and all men define Deity or God, he yet turns away from it, shrinks from it, and puts it from him as of no use to his *philosophy!* And yet, the sublime truth stood before him, as it stands unacknowledged to-day before the consciousness of all Seers in Science, Philosophy, and Religion, "little attention" being bestowed upon it, that *this*, for the human mind, is the absolute Transfiguration of the Universe. His shrinking fear was surely natural and to be looked for, seeing it was due to his entering into such an uncharted consciousness of it, and therefore similar to the dread which the three apostles experienced when the Cloud enveloped them on the mountain top. Everyone who so prays, and is so answered, as sooner or later they will be so answered, must endure the same unspeakable awe. It is the eternal "without" communing with the eternal "within," if we must phrase it dually; true Deep calling to true Deep; What-we-are, conscious of itself, simultaneously, with Absolute Being; both, if we must say so, seen together above all divisive conceptions as Whole-Being, in which no "part" is even thinkable.

To Herbert Spencer, in that experience, heaven and earth passed away. He rose above the mental region where Objectivity and Relativity are created and made, and he was left solely with this *consciousness* of Space-Being. It was terrible indeed, because he found it impossible either to conceive or

perceive it, or obtain either centre or circumference in it absolutely. He indeed speaks of space having "properties"! But anything whatsoever that he might have said about it we must regard in the light of Peter's remarks under fear, viz., as "not knowing what he said." Every transfiguration makes the brain reel. We reach in it the true sublime.

It is most notable, however, that he was aware that such a vision carried him quite outside the limits of Creation and Evolution. The "space" which has "dimensions" lies strictly within such notions of Creation and Evolution, as Science and Philosophy know them. The Space which is What-we-are, knows nothing of them. But when we stand in its light, we are conscious that it is not light that comes to us from "without," as sunlight to earth, or as lamplight to the eye, but is light *native* to *What-we-are*, springing up "within" and transfiguring us in the eyes of others—Light of Being, by which all are aware of existence. That is to say, it is pure consciousness, with its vergeless affirmation "I am"; with the unityless all-comprehending "IS" as its supreme idiom—an affirmation, however, which sweeps away, as already said, every possible negation of Thought with a force unequalled by any energy or force known to us in the Universe. For, as we repeat for emphasis, creational and evolutionary Forces or Energies are not on this same plane of Being, but may be likened to such energies as Will, Thought, Sensation "within" ourselves, but far beneath the elevation and energy of existence of which we are conscious in What-we-are: "I AM." For Space-

Being gives the true consciousness of Absolute or Whole-Energy. All other finite forces, creational or evolutionary, seem to find their ultimate *thrust* against Space, speaking in the manner of the mechanic.

51. Relative Terms for Being Conveniently Helpful.

Therefore, it should be more clear to us now that our entire field of *conceptions*, or, the region of all our thoughts, ideas, notions, etc., lies *within* the consciousness which we have of them, and which consciousness transcends, and so leads us beyond them. They change, but consciousness is always unchanging. They are brain-created and evolved, but consciousness is uncreated. We cannot separate consciousness from Space-Being.

From which contemplation we infer that any conception or idea which we may formulate concerning what we *are*, *essentially*, such as "soul," "spirit," "Ego," "Feeling," "Psychosis," "Unit-Being," "personality," etc., will always bear in itself a sense of inadequacy, or lack of self-evident truth. It will always give us a consciousness of possible change, or larger implement of reality. And it is in this feature, or relationship, between the idea and the consciousness of it, that in our *consciousness* we carry a far higher standard of Reality or Truth than we can find in any of our *conceptions*.

These ideas are conveniences, no doubt, to common thinking, but it is evident that they are totally outwith the facts which are given us in the Transfigura-

tion scene. No more do they fit in with the appearances of Jesus after death to His disciples. We are safer to accept the Reality which our consciousness of Space-Being constantly presents to us, viz., that everything and everyone which we in our judgments have named Object, Individual, Person, Soul, Spirit, etc., has common being with Space-Being, and is in no wise divisible from Space-Being; and likewise, that Space-Being is what our consciousness is ever commending to our thoughts as "GOD," "Spirit," "Eternity," "Absolute," "Infinite," etc., etc. As we have seen, Herbert Spencer, when face to face with this consciousness of Space, *instinctively gives to it the attributes of Godhood;* and, indeed, no one can honestly do otherwise. We always have in it *more* than we can put into our conceptive terms, "spiritual," or "material." For, as has been already said, no *category* can express its fulness. IS, alone, is its idiom, and this affirmation is the *basis* of all categories conceivable, and includes all.

52. The State of our "Dead."

Therefore, as Moses, Elijah, and the Cloud moved in the same Space-Being as that involving Jesus and His three apostles, we are justified in inferring that all the "dead" of the earth find the Ultimate condition of their existence identical with the same Space-Being of which we are conscious as living men, and also that there is no other "Eternity" than the one we already occupy and experience every day. Heaven and earth may pass away for the dead, worlds may come and go in the vastitude

of what we call the temporal, but What-we-are abides as it ever has been, and ever shall be, space-being, which, like Jesus, "anteceded all creation and all evolution," "without origin or cause," immortal, not because it is One, or incomplete, but because it is same being with Space-Being whether under the "Temporal" terms or the "Spiritual."

53. "Creation" and "Evolution" subsumed in "Transfiguration."

The Transfiguration concept, therefore, carries in it a far greater truth than "Creation" or "Evolution." These terms seem to require the *origin* of their energies to rise in a reservoir *outside* of themselves. They always direct us towards a Cause independent of themselves. Whereas the unchanging consciousness of Space-Being, as Almighty Being, into which heaven and earth vanish, and the same unchanging being which is self-transfiguring in the man Jesus, gives us a direct affirmation that the Universe, considered as ultimately Space-Being, is Self-Existing, Self-Ordering, Self-Rectifying, and Self-Illuminating. This is the same consciousness which Jesus interpreted in Himself when He said, "*I* am the Resurrection and the Life," "*I* am the Way, Truth, Light, etc." The Being He was conscious of, assured Him that uncreated, self-begotten energy rose *out of Himself* to give life to Himself as well as to the dead. He was self-illuminating, self-directing, self-existing. Or, taking it out to the fulness of consciousness, *He more than implied that All that exists, by its nature of being Space,*

has that within itself which gives itself Life beyond death, as Moses and Elijah had, and can see the Unseen, know the Unknown, and enjoy absolute Beatitude beyond all unhappiness. His command to those to whom He addressed the words, "Ask, Seek, Knock," implied that *the forces lay within themselves* to effect satisfaction of their every want. And therefore He confidently commanded His disciples to do *all* the works which He Himself had done, and to go into the world in the *same spirit* with which He Himself, as mortal man, had been endowed.

54. The Apostolic View of Resurrection not Consonant with Christ's.

Perhaps we should here caution ourselves not to be misled by the beliefs of the Apostles, who in their writings assert generally (drawing their doctrine from the Old Testament) that *God* raised Jesus from the dead, implying that the power of Resurrection was not innate in Himself, but derived from a different Being from Himself. But Jesus never says that *God* would raise Him from the dead. He says, "*I* am the Resurrection and the Life." He does say that "As the Father raiseth the dead and quickeneth them, *even so* the Son also quickeneth whom He will," which implies common power, equal in Son and in Father. Also "All power is delivered unto Me." But when we remember that He asserts that even as the Father has worked in times past so He Himself works, and that at the back of all His teaching

He has the conviction that the "Father" is *same being with Himself*, Himself the full "Father" even to men's eyes, we can understand that "the Father" is not a separate Person from Him, as we might say of one man as distinct from another man, but fundamentally and essentially *Same-Being*. The separative *idea* is given but not a separate *person*. He only feels compelled to teach His truth through the conceptions which men had fixed in their minds with regard to the feebleness of man's mortality as being fed from the power that resided in a "God" who was afar off in Heaven. The rigid conceptions of Three distinct Beings of the Godhead, as popularly conceived, and which has been so long stamped into the minds of Christians, is even yet hindrance enough to our realising the full fact of Whole-Being as our true consciousness of Space-Being, which is Same-Being with What-we-are. We must expect *every* conception we have, concerning things "human" or "divine," to be transfigured beyond the limits given to them in the past thoughts and meditations of men. And we must do so because all such "creative evolution" comes forth *from within* man, even as it arose in the Son of Man.

55. Resurrection an Universally Active Principle.

This innate power in all things to effect their own transfiguration might be illustrated by the magnet. "Dead" energy is quickened in it to "live" energy, and a "live" magnet can create an endless number of other "live" magnets *without losing any of its own matter or energy.*

Now this seems to run counter to all our notions of matter or energy. But it seems to be accepted that the "live" magnet only gives certain conditions to the "dead" steel *by which its own latent power leaps into "live" energy also.* Why should not the same "law" hold for all substances in the universe? The flame of a lamp calls forth flame in another without adding anything to that other except the condition of proximity. All birth seems to imply the same fact.

The sun comes and acts upon the "dead" earth and supplies the condition by which the innate "life" of the earth changes winter into spring. On a higher plane of things, Jesus comes to this world and gives in His presence and revelation the essential conditions by which every man rises from his "dead" self to the identical "life" in Jesus Himself, and thus all men become "one" in Him, as He is "one" in the "Father." Jesus expected indeed that every one should so become conscious that the "life" in himself was capable of living up to the fulness of that perfection which was in the "Father." And he also expected that every man so "quickened" would act on his fellowman through all time to quicken every man, until all were magnetically vital. The yeast that leavened the whole content of meal, bears upon the same idea. *All that has come forth from man in his Civilisations and Religions lay within man, awaiting the conditions of its resurrection from "death."*

This illustration, however, fails to connect actual things with true "life." Magnetic powers may be

similar, but they do not rise to our conception of life. Quiescent energy is only put in motion, but this motion is not "life"-motion, as we are yet accustomed to think. And we need the motion of Life for the fact of Resurrection. But science does not dogmatise upon "life," because, so far, it is for most part an unknown. But, according to her own scientific expounders, "life" comes very near to rising from the "dead."

56. Huxley on Life.

For example, Huxley has said, "It will be observed that the existence of the matter of life depends on the pre-existence of certain compounds, viz., carbonic acid, water, and ammonia. Withdraw any of these from the world, and all vital phenomena come to an end. They are related to the protoplasm of the plant as the protoplasm of the plant is to that of the animal. Carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen are all lifeless bodies. Of these, carbon and oxygen unite in certain proportions, and under certain conditions, to give rise to carbonic acid; hydrogen and oxygen produce water; nitrogen and hydrogen give rise to ammonia. These new compounds, like the elementary bodies of which they are composed, are lifeless. But when they are brought together, under certain conditions, they give rise to the still more complex body, protoplasm, and this protoplasm exhibits the phenomena of life" (*Lay Sermons*, p. 135).

57. Life Potential in all Things conceived as a "Form" of Power.

Such a statement as this offers a wide field for suggestion. We are not surprised, indeed, that it should be affirmed that—"Every scientific authority in the world now believes that life was naturally evolved from the chemicals of the early earth." It is this fact which we believe to exist, and which science is quickly speeding forward to corroborate by demonstration, viz., "That the power of life" as a conceived *form* of that full power which lies latent in all things, belongs to everything innately, and is, *in the ultimate*, space-power. In thinking, no doubt, we divide them into Life-power, Thought-power, Sensation-power, Material- and Mental-power, and such like, but in our *being* they are nameable as space-power, and are in no wise divisible.

And although our terms are different from His, nothing seems more certain to Jesus than that what is "dead" arises into life. All His teaching assumes this power. For example, no "sign," which His generation counted a "sign," was to be placed beside the "sign of the prophet Jonah," the "sign" of the Resurrection. No sign, He said, would be given them, but this sign. It alone He counted as a true sign, and selected it as worthy of their acceptance. "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." The earth would swallow the Son of Man as the fish swallowed Jonah, but would render Him forth again in Life to the world.

CHAPTER VII

58. Life Self-transfigured out of Death.

THIS principle of Life, self-transfigured out of death, is constantly affirmed and illustrated in all that Jesus sets forth in His doctrine. The seed cast into the ground is familiar. "Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it beareth much fruit." The conditions are given by which the "dead" thing ascends again to life. The three measures of meal, as said above, illustrate the same fact. The human sphere in its *social* aspect yields Him the same truth. It is even stated with pointed emphasis in the words, "This my Son was dead, and is alive again." The dead grain, the dead meal, the dead heart, all are transfigured into "life." In each case the conditions are given by which the "dead" rises to the life-level *by a power residing in itself.*

He also asserts that the same power rules our deeper spiritual natures. "Ye must be born anew, or again." In modern phrase this means "Die to live." In the John Gospel, the resurrection of the "*soul*" is even distinguished from the resurrection of the "*body*" (John v. 24-29). He says, "The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead (not in tombs)

shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and *they that hear* shall live." In the "hour" that now is, a resurrection to life is going on among those who are hearing and are bodily alive. A truth which is repeated in such words as "He that heareth my word and believeth Him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed from death into life." But He gives other conditions for the resurrection of the dead *body*. "The hour *cometh* (not '*now* is') in which all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth." The "tomb" word evidently points to earth. At least, the terms are quite distinctly different in the two cases (John v. 24-28). Moreover, *the agency* of resurrection is, for both "soul" and "body," *His voice*. And it is worth noting that "soul" receives "life" by hearing the voice of the Son of *God*, while bodily "life" rising from the tomb is due to hearing the voice of the Son of *Man*. Souls are also being raised in the hour that "now is," but "body" is raised out of its tomb in an hour that yet "cometh." To Jesus, resurrection is a mode of *all* being, and *potential in all*, when given the conditions.

59. Self-Transfiguration a World-wide Movement.

And no great gift of insight into historic time is required to discern that, on the wide world-scale, it is the voice of the Son of God heard by men which has, *through men themselves*, raised the world into the best life it now knows. The principle of resurrection, which fundamentally is the same principle as transfiguration, the only difference being in the *forms* of

life and light, is one which is not confined to the "hour" coming, and which we style the "Last Day." It is in full process of activity over all the earth in the hour that "now is." But, indeed, wherever the "Voice" is heard, the dead live. For like the magnetic energy in the dead steel, life ever waits in all things for the conditions which shall call it forth.

And in the teaching of Jesus, the principal condition seems to have been Prayer. He appears to have had constant experience of this innate power, as well as of its endless efficacy throughout all time. It is because of His praying that the world is being transfigured. And He discerned that there was capacity and power in any man, if he so desired or prayed with faith, to remove mountains, and trees into the sea — metaphors which point to *absolute* power. His own resurrection He brings home to Himself, and His raising the dead, walking on the lake, stilling the storm, curing the blind, and similar works, are to be held as *forms* of the same personal energy.

60. Jesus avoids the Term "Death."

It is therefore a rational inference that this principle is a universal one and is in activity ceaselessly. No form of death is the last word on any being. Perhaps the deep thought of Jesus is that there is no death. He declared that God, who is God over all, is not a God of the dead but of the living. Indeed, there can be no such thought as death in the mind of God, speaking in the usual way

of theology. Or rather, it is impossible for us to predicate of God that such a view of death should be in His mind as we have of it in ours. Jesus avoids the term. He certainly does not know the idea of death which men have so long entertained. He cancels the word "death" by the term "sleep." "I go to awake him out of sleep," He says of the dead Lazarus. "She is not dead but sleepeth," He affirms of Jairus's daughter. He is conscious that even the dead stones are ready to cry out in His praise (Luke xix. 40). He speaks to inanimate things, the winds, the sea, the tree, the corpses, as if they were but drowsing, and yet alive enough to hear His voice. And His conviction in the universality of such vivifying power seems clear to us, in that He sends forth His disciples to raise the dead, to do all He Himself had done, and even "greater works than these"! Given the condition of faith, as He Himself possessed it, and the same power would manifest itself in His followers in all time. "It is the spirit that quickeneth," or giveth life, and "the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit and they are life." "Go, make disciples of all the nations," by uttering the "voice of the Son of Man." "They that *hear* shall live." *Universally, nothing in this universe is so dead as to be absolutely beyond hearing, or responding to conditions which arouse change in it towards higher being.* That is to say, the powers of "life" and "death" as the Cosmos knows them, and as Man has conceived them, are under the control of "that eternal" power on which the Cosmos reposes, viz., Space Power

absolute: "I am" power. And consequently, all that was possible to Jesus in the consciousness of His "I am" affirmation, is still possible to all. This light lighteth every man coming into the world.

61. Space, I, Life, Light, a Scientific Sequence for Reason.

The John Gospel, therefore, says truly, "The Life is the Light of men." The life rising from the "dead" ultimately shines as light. Life, the principle of resurrection, comes naturally before Light, the characteristic element in transfiguration. The transfiguration of Jesus in light was not possible until He proved Himself to be Life from death to the world. But being this Life, His transfiguration, or the passage of His Life upwards into His Light, was as natural as that the sun would shine. And this sequence of natural power in Himself may have been the reason why He forbade the Apostles to declare the fact of His transfiguration before they had first made known the fact of His resurrection.

It seems, accordingly, that the course of scientific investigation, or *scientific prayer*, by asking, seeking, knocking, should follow the path of Christ's thoughts and teaching. Or, the investigation into the nature of *Light* ought to assume *Life* as its basis. And the enquiry into the nature of *Life* ought to assume the "I" of which we are conscious, as, in turn, Life's basis; and the search into our consciousness of "*I*" ought to assume *Space* as its ultimate and absolute Being; and so, by such conceived steps, show that Being is whole or absolute, and that nothing that ever

happened to Jesus was singular or peculiar to Him specially, but is as possible to everything in heaven and in earth—the same *principle* being *in* everything, absolutely.

62. Christ's Thought-Order the Best Basis for Science and Philosophy.

In this way, on a basis of fact and reason, we should have no actual divisions between "Matter" and "Mind," between Science and Religion, between Religion and Philosophy, except as necessary for purposes of thought and reasoning. For although, in the enumeration of Space, Person, Life and Light, we mark, as it were, the gradation of Universal Being, as the edifice rises up before us in Time, we must not forget that Space-Being enters into and is fundamental for all being, and that such terms as Person, or Thing, and Life and Light are but *names* which we give to certain conceptions of Space-Being, in its various manifestations, much as we speak of mind, memory, will, sensation, etc., as manifestations of *what we are.* Yet, undoubtedly, the manifestations have a certain order in their coming forth, or appearing; and the course of thought in man, or his scientific pursuit, would yield more satisfaction if he could find that the doctrine of Jesus would lead him more successfully than the dim, uncertain utterances of baffled predecessors, and of teachers themselves not yet taught. Jesus, we are convinced, is the best Text-Book for absolute Science and the study of the sphere of Reality.

For, when He said "Heaven and earth shall pass

away but My words shall not pass," His sole remaining consciousness was of Space-Being, or *That of which Science takes no account.* His conscious "I" was identically conscious Space. There was nothing else left. He thus indicated the eternal basis of Being, and the "*words*" that would not pass away to be that "I AM" *affirmation* in Space-Being manifesting itself in the universal *forms* or "words" of the Cosmos. And the impossibility of Space as passing away is affirmed in every consciousness of Being. It is, as H. Spencer said, "*the consciousness that without origin or cause, infinite space has ever existea and must ever exist.*" Was it not this fact which Plato pondered long, and Kant found to be essential to every human thought? Both, however, like Spencer himself, put it aside as of no use in their systems of philosophy, while Jesus, on the contrary, implies its conscious presence as being at the foundation of all He has to say. It is really the Divine Unconsciousness which lies behind the expressed Consciousness which we call the "Four Gospels": or that which is yet hidden and slowly being made known in and through them.

63. Why we Insist upon the Consciousness of Space.

Of course we are fully aware that this reference to Space-Being as basis of all resurrection and transfiguration, absolutely, may be received with some impatience by the reader who has never been accustomed to consider this Reality as *necessary* to sound thinking in any way. Our reason for

monotonously insisting upon the consciousness of Space as the Key to all Knowledge, absolutely, is because Science, Philosophy, and Theology have monotonously insisted upon explaining the Universe, Man, and God independently of it through all past time. Closer consideration will disclose to the reader the deep connection that exists between the abyss "without" and the abyss "within" the human "soul," and both (assuming their separation for purposes of reasoning) as intensely intimate with the atmosphere of prayer, and the full communion, or *soliloquy*, of Eternal Being. We habitually turn from the consciousness of Space-Being, as said above, because it appears to be the utmost negation of everything which we are wont to regard as essential to our activities as living creatures. From time immemorial, and still more in modern days, ideals of supreme excellence assume, as indisputable, the fact of man as an *isolated* centre of energy! The universe in all its vast complexities seems to corroborate this view. The powers of the earth itself; the gigantic forces of mass and speed in the countless worlds around us; the immeasurable and perpetual motions of all creation, wholly absorb the attention of thinkers, and the wonder of wonders which we name "Space" is passed by as unnecessary to our judgment of things, and is tacitly regarded as "dead" and useless! Empty vacuity!

64. Man's Past Vision of his Inner and Outer Universes Develops Simultaneously.

We have referred to the child, and the learned investigators in scientific pursuits, as simultaneously widening their knowledge of the universe as they enlarge their insight into their own personality. It seems to us that this can be illustrated in the history of philosophy and astronomy.

Man's vision of his outer and inner universes, *i.e.* of *Nature* and *himself*, has followed the same historical development in his experience of both. The "Sky," to the aboriginals of the world, was simply a consciousness of flat solid plane, in which sun, moon, and stars were set at equal distances to the spectator. But observers of the heavens broke up this consciousness and its accompanying conceptions by placing an immense vastitude of space between the Solar and Stellar spheres. The latter receded into Space to a perspective almost immeasurable. But Space itself was always as yet considered as "pure Void," and of no value in the general system of things! It did not come within the "Nature" of men's conceptions. It offered no object or so-called reality to any sense organ. The vast interwoven veil of suns, moons, and stars, which falls over the Face Unseen, was considered alone as the sole Reality.

Similarly, in gazing "within" themselves, the early psychologists viewed all the "sky" of conscious being "within" as a mentally flat plane. And it was so far considered solid as to be spoken of in terms of *quantity*, and assumed to be *substantial.* This con-

sciousness was described as a "*tabula rasa*," on which might be seen the panorama of mind-images, such as will, sensation, conception, reason, memory, etc., later termed "faculties." The "soul" was held to be in the same plane as these, and, up to our own time, has been so *distinctly* discerned as to be defined by the limitations of Unity. The "soul" was affirmed to be *One*—a single Quantity!

65. Plotinus, Kant, and Hegel.

Plotinus seems to have been the first mental astronomer to be conscious of a deeper deep in this survey, and to put a vast receding perspective of inner "distance" between ordinary conceptions, thoughts, sensations, desires, etc., and the all-important "Soul." This ONE, this Being, he discerned to be, indeed, a solitary; but immensely apart and afar off in the inner firmament of mind, yet still qualifiable as one.

Long afterwards, Kant strongly emphasised this perspective in the consciousness of *what-we-are*. He saw in the foreground of consciousness a great number of "faculties," answering to (say) sun, moon, and stars "without," and the "One," the "I Am," "within," removed to an infinite vista. So far off, indeed, was the soul in this mental immensity, as to become like a comet, completely engulfed in it, outside and beyond all thought or imagination, and so intensely apart from everything as to be a "thing-in-itself." It could not be brought within Kant's "I think." It was his "I am"; but an absolute isolation.

This assumption of isolated being for himself was fatal to truth. For it prevented him from including it as the principal fact in his philosophy. It could not be known! Yet, he *knew* it was his Self, his "I Am"! He was also conscious that he could not think away space from his Mind-Area. It was his ultimate consciousness. For Himself, as for the Cosmos, he had the same ultimate consciousness, Space.

Then, afterwards, Hegel took up this consciousness of space which had swallowed out of sight Kant's "Thing-in-itself," and seriously regarded it as the absolute basis of his schema of thought. He describes it as "a bare and simple beyond," as "empty," "and positively the naked universal." He, however, gave to it an abstract objectivity of Unity, the Unity of *Being* and *Nothing*, equal to *Becoming*!

That is to say, the astronomers of both the universe without and the universe within, declared that the ultimate consciousness of *What was*, was a consciousness of Space, a consciousness which *never* gives us the concept of unity—a unity indeed which is solely due to our judgment, and is brain-begotten. It was a true, boundless, homogeneous consciousness without and within. And being so, we are surely justified to the full in affirming that Being is Whole and undivided, and that his "blank form of existence," as Spencer judged it to be, far from being blank, empty, and bare, is as truly to be regarded as living, thinking, feeling, willing, desiring, etc., "within," as "without," and "without" as "within."

66. The Illusion of Insubstantiality in our Space-Consciousness.

But it is a well-known fact that thinkers rather incline to trust what comes within the practice of reason and understanding than to an indistinguishable consciousness, however strongly they may be impressed by it. It is perhaps the absence, in our consciousness of Space, of any outline or form as indicating something *substantial* to rest upon, that has led to its being ignored, and so "little attention" to be paid to it, as Spencer has said. The mind craves substantiality and concreteness; and Space, in our consciousness of it, appears to be the absolutely insubstantial.

But when we reflect that our consciousness of What-we-are is exactly the same consciousness which we have for Space, and that we cannot bring what-we-are under any term differing from Space; and yet, that our consciousness of What-we-are is our deepest and fullest consciousness of substantiality, reality, or, absolutely, *What Is*, we discern at once that our profoundest convictions of *Substance* are primarily guaranteed to all that comes within Reason and Understanding, to perception and conception, by this very same "empty," "bare," and "blank form of existence" called Space. There is no substantiality comparable for a moment to our consciousness of our own Substance, "empty" as it is said to be, besides which both ancient and modern philosophers have found all the other "substances" in the universe unsubstantial and flowing away. And perhaps this

accounts for the fact that man has found it easier to know his "gods" than to know himself. For man has always fashioned his "gods" out of the material of his perceptions and conceptions, but has found this impossible with himself. All Christendom is at this day far more satisfied with the form or forms of its gods, than any single Christian is with the conception of what-he-is. And it is because that no *conception* of himself has ever satisfied any man. Only his *consciousness* of himself gives him solid, substantial assurance, and all the conceptual images of his creeds, and the learned categories of the schools, stand for ever in overshadowing suspicion.

CHAPTER VIII

67. Jesus Defines Himself to the Pharisees.

THEREFORE, in contrast to this age-long tendency, it is somewhat remarkable that Jesus, in answering men's natural enquiries as to WHO-He-was, carefully but steadfastly led them through, and finally away, from all conceptual, rational, or sensible images of Himself, to the "empty," "bare," and "blank" consciousness of Himself, designated "I AM," as His final answer to them.

We have a full and detailed account of this procedure in the John Gospel, viii. 12-58.

Jesus said to the Pharisees, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (verse 12). He states this absolutely. He is the transfiguring Light springing out of Life, within which there is no shadow of darkness. He regards His personality as same-being with both impersonal Light and personal Life. Impersonal and personal being are synthesised in His "I Am" consciousness. For *absolute* being must necessarily include and transcend both these conceptions of our judgments. And, of course, this is not a unique instance of His doing so. It will be remembered that He obliterated sex qualifications

from the names "Father" and "Son," and conferred impersonality upon them instead, when He said, "I and the Father are *one*." (John x. 30) where "one" is ἕν, and neuter. And from His free use of all impersonal and personal things as characterising His I-consciousness, or What-He-was, we are led to conclude that He believed His Being to be synthetic of both. It is evidently His method of breaking down the limitations of conceptive unit-being.

68. The I-Consciousness is not of a Unit, or of He, She, or It.

And as a matter of common experience, the same consciousness is found within ourselves yet. There is nothing in our I-consciousness to justify in the slightest, our qualifying our being as either unit he, she, or it. It is a consciousness which defies all relationship with anything we conceive as in heaven or in earth. It is purely a consciousness of surfaceless, formless, limitless space, in which all relativity perishes. But on the lower level of "understanding" and the "categories" it is, of course, different.

69. The I-Truth is Truth which witnesses absolutely.

The Pharisees gave Him the lie direct. "Thou bearest witness of thyself; thy witness is not true" (verse 13). Jesus answered, "Even if I bear witness of myself, my witness is true." Which is genuine psychological fact. Our conscious "I" affirms *absolute* Reality or Truth, and needs nothing to substantiate it. It is our absolute consciousness

of Being. Therefore, everything else in judgments *must* come to the test of this conscious "I," in order to be believed as true: just as everything must be "in" space before we can *believe* it to *be*. We cannot separate space from anything which we either sense or believe to exist.

70. Through Conceptive Being Christ teaches Limitless Being.

But such a statement of unconditioned Being for Himself was far beyond their comprehension, and therefore He clothes it in concepts which were familiar to them. "My witness is true: for I know *whence* I came, and *whither* I go" (verse 14). He is conscious of, and therefore knows His Origin and End, His Past and Future, and these are the problems when applied to man, which give bounds yet to all science, philosophy, and theology. That is to say, He is again, in language less repellent to them, making the same statement of witnessing to Himself as *absolute* Being and Supreme Truth.

But as this still staggers the Pharisees, He comes to lower ground still, and reasons on the plane of the conditioned and relational, pointing out, however, that He does not judge on the same basis as they do (verse 15). They judge "after the flesh." He judges none at all. He merely states absolute facts about Himself, of which He is conscious. His consciousness is His highest guarantee of Reality.

Yet, if they must have the testimony of Two witnesses, they can have this inferior criterion too. His Father is One, assumed, and He Himself is the

other. They will understand this position? Well, then, *both* affirm the same thing. But when they now press Him to produce the Father in the flesh, after which they judge, He returns to His first position and tells them that to know Himself *is* to know the Father. He affirms once more that His I-consciousness synthesises the relativity of two persons in one judgment of common being (verse 19). It is another form of the statement, "I and the Father are One-Being," and "He that receiveth me receiveth *not* me, but Him that sent me." From which it is justifiably inferable that whoever stands in the same conscious "I" of his being will also simultaneously have the same consciousness of Whole-Being as He had, instead of that separated, isolated, personal Being which must necessarily lean upon relational testimony for its truth.

And we are convinced that it was in the depths of this great consciousness that Jesus could speak concerning *Who* He was in such absolute terms as noted above, and of Himself as being "*in*" His disciples; as *before* all time; as *before* the world was; as "one *with* the Father"; as having the glory of the Father *before* the foundation of the world; as the Holy Spirit abiding *in* His disciples: as existing unto the end of the world; and after heaven and earth passed away. For if we also grasp the fact that the same things can be said of space, then by the above reasoning, everything that Jesus said concerning Himself we also can say of ourselves.

71. "The Unity beyond the Difference," or the "Thing-in-itself."

Jesus, therefore, has no encouragements for those who dogmatically cut up Being, and declare that "*Self*" is absolutely separated from "*Not-Self*" and both from "*God*." These entities of our judgments are just as real as the divisions of our "Self," which we designate "Body," "Mind," and "Spirit."

There is, indeed, in such philosophies, something which is described as the "Unity beyond the difference," *i.e.* the "thing-in-itself," and which is supposed to meet all our cravings for Oneness of Being. But as this "thing-in-itself" is itself "One," it is thereby, as we must always insist, involved in *quantity*, like all numbers whatsoever, and cannot escape from halving, quartering, squaring, cubing, and all the "differences" from which it is assumed to deliver us.

72. "I Am" is the true Whole—or Absolute—Being.

Being must be viewed as Whole, and not merely as One, or a mere Total-of-All. Beginnings, Endings, Firsts and Lasts, Time and Eternity, are pure creations of our mental machinery, serviceable enough for many purposes, but *fundamentally* transient. No "Eternity" of our theologies can be equalled to the Eternity given us by Space. And although Jesus often speaks of persons as separated, the language is necessary and convenient, as in this case, for His teaching, moral and ethical, and to suit

the minds of His listeners, who believed that moral and ethical systems survived the grave. He rises to higher planes of conscious Being when He declares, "The Father is in me, and I in the Father." "I in them and Thou in me." "Whosoever receiveth me, receiveth *not* me, but *Him* that sent me." And although the language, like the words, "I and the Father are one," suggests limitation, the meaning is clearly of *same being*, which it is His obvious intention to declare. It is analagous, *e.g.*, to such expressions as "one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day;" the real meaning being "There is no Time with God," not that His years are short or long. So also when Jesus says, "The last shall be first and the first last," His meaning is that in *His* kingdom there are no superiors or inferiors, as among Gentiles, or any system of preferences and arbitrary dispositions. His method of teaching, indeed, is always to begin with the "individual," which is level to ordinary thought, and then co-ordinate the many into One, after the practice of the world's greatest thinkers, as in the wish "that they may *all* be one," and then from such singleness of limitation of being, to make the Grand Ascension to Being as whole and boundless—"I AM." When, *e.g.*, He asserts, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," He defies the human intellect to distinguish Him from the highest Being; He is *with* God, and *is* God. The separative conceptions "divine" and "human" melt out of sight. As a matter of fact, "I AM" knows neither.

We now take it upon us to say that absolutely separated "personalities," are inadmissible within the thought and consciousness of Jesus, except for purposes of teaching, and to suit the ordinary thoughts of men. *Complete transfiguration, or an absolute realisation of What-we-are, is always for Him, one free from all limitations, form or figure; a truly space-consciousness—"I."*

73. "Nature" as a "Closed System."

But this now implies that we have widened our conception of "*Nature.*" In all literatures, "Nature" stands only for the myriad multiplicity of things *in* Space, or as "that which we observe in perfection through the senses" (Whitehead's *Concept of Nature*, p. 3, 1920). The term, in its meaning, *never* includes Space. Now, we have tried to show that "Nature" is being constantly transfigured to those who pray, or who ask, and seek, and knock. The process is universal when men do so. If there is no new vision in nature, it is because men are not praying: which shows that there is always a deep in "nature" which the human mind has not beheld. And this further deep is the consciousness of Space to which the intellect of man has given no value. Indeed, scientists and thinkers, of whom Hume is a type, have mistakenly regarded the Universe as a "closed system," and have treated it as rigidly uniform; as Unit-Being; with all its "laws" defined, and radiating from its centre to its circumference. They have beheld it in their thoughts as one might regard a sphere resting on a table, themselves assumed to

be quite apart from it! The great consciousness of Space, so insistent in all thought, has been totally ignored. It nowhere comes into their data of such a judgment of Unit-Being. Indeed, if they had included it in such a judgment, it would have been impossible for them to view all "Nature" as a "closed system." For our possible consciousness of Space is of absolutely wide-open Being. Therefore, it follows that there must be far more, by infinity, of "Nature" *outside* than *inside* of this so-called "closed universe." We must also fall back upon our consciousness of Space-Being in order to rationalise our belief that into Space heaven and earth will some day vanish, even as they have come forth from it, and to justify the conception of *new* heavens and *new* earth as a valid and reasonable judgment.

As soon as we value Space not as vacuous but as basal being for "Nature," "Nature" also stands before us in transfiguration which is absolute. And it is absolute, because, as H. Spencer put it, "the consciousness that without origin or cause, infinite Space has ever existed and must ever exist, produces in us a feeling from which we shrink." We cannot say more of "God." The human mind is filled up to its infinite depths. Or, in other words, the consciousness within for *what-we-are* is *identical* with the consciousness we have of Space. That which has *no origin* is the origin of all we assume to begin, and that which has *no cause* is the cause of all we assume to be caused, and that which seems to be "*Nothing*" is the All, or Whole-being. Kenosis is Pleroma.

And perhaps it is because of the emergence of true Being out of what we accustom ourselves to call "nothing," that surprise and a measure of scepticism ever attend transfiguration. So did Jacob exclaim, "Surely God is in this place, and I knew it not." It was comparatively "nothing" to him before; and yet out of this "nothing" the supreme Everything leaped into light. No discovery made by the human apprehension occurs otherwise.

74. *Ex Nihilo Nihil Fit.*

Therefore, the *ex nihilo nihil fit* of the so-called philosophers is rendered untrue. All Life and all Light come forth from "Nothing," from absolute blank and "darkness," or rather from *that*-which-doth-not-appear—Space-Being.

But when we say "comes forth from 'nothing,'" we are aware that the very terms are misleading, for no thing leaves Space-Being *behind* it, or has being *forth* of Space. Without Space in our consciousness, as said above, we could not even *think* anything to *be*. It is perhaps the fundamental delusion in all human thought, that all and everything which has form and objectivity exists *apart* from space. Hence, of course, the almost complete absence in literature of any reference to space. The great thinkers who do so, and they nearly all do so, impress us as having stumbled accidentally into speaking of it. Necessarily. For even the best literatures, with all their mighty masterpieces, move only amongst ideals, ideas, conceptions, and objective images, things that are mentally seen, heard, and felt. The "I AM"

depths where Jesus stands, and from which He confers with the Pharisees, lie far beyond such literary efforts. The Pharisees were typical of the world in this respect.

75. Space-Consciousness affirms the Sinlessness of Being.

In former times man had been taught, as he is yet, to hold his being as quite aloof from Creation, and to be of different being from "Nature," and its ultimate basis in Space. All "Matter" was the corrupt thing! Therefore the "Flesh" could not live with the "Spirit." Therefore God was compelled to abandon the earth and preserve His purity by taking refuge in the heavens! But Man, who was forced to abide on the ground, was thereby begotten in sin and evil and uncleanness. Consequently from such conceptions of Man and of the Universe, it is not wonderful that the human intellect should yet be sunk in distortions.

We are wise to accept rather the teaching of Jesus, and *abandon all else.* And as we see, He takes Man always as the key to every problem, the Light upon every mystery, the Way through every rock. For in him lies the "Light of Life." In *what* man *is*, sin has no place any more than it has place in space. It only becomes a "conscience" in his *relationships* which are themselves creations of the mind.

As Jesus said, the "I AM" which man is, when truly believed, enables him *to die without sin* (John viii. 24). The ever-widening knowledge of himself and the universe, brings him at last

beyond all conceptuality of either, to the pure consciousness of Space absolute, "without" as "within," and the certainty, in what he is, of pure freedom from both sin and death. For Jesus refuses to carry the connection of either sin or death to the Absolute Being. These conceptions begin in man, and end in Man, Himself, the Son of Man, who alone judges sin. But we discuss this more fully below in Part III.

76, How "Everything" dawns on Human Thought out of "Nothing."

Man being also such Light of Life, it is evident that it is from him that we must ask the answer to the question—How does the vast complexity of the Universe, with its innumerable suns, moons, stars, nebulæ, gases, ether, etc., etc., arise to our sensibilities from absolute space? How does the "Everything" dawn on human thought from this "Nothing"? This important question we tried to meet in the book, *Space and Personality*, at some length, but it is sufficient to say here that the question demands first its answer from "within" ourselves. How do the energies we call Will, Thought, Feeling, arise out of What-we-are, and come forth into the realms of sensibility, when our only consciousness of What-we-are is one of Space, universally characterised by philosophers as "blank," "bare," "empty," "simple beyond," "nothingness of appearance," "naked universal," and similar terms? The question is not different for space and What-we-are.

It is true that the human mind staggers when asked to believe that the vast "Energy" manifested throughout the Universe is more than balanced by the "Force" which asserts existence-in-itself, "I Am." For we usually compare such "Energy" with its myriad subordinate "forces" on the material plane of things, and our "*matter*" is, of course, a very subsidiary fraction of the great creational system. But all Energy so manifested in the Cosmos is as weakness itself when compared with *That* from which it obtains its thrust, or fulcrum, or force—That, viz., which we name Space. *For nothing which we cover under the concept "Energy" affirms self-existent being; always referring itself to an Other, which Space never does.* The Universe is as a Pascal's "reed," against which he set man as greater, because he was a thinking "reed." But although man is, as body, an infinitesimal crumb of cosmic Energy, and a far higher form of such energy in his Thought, he is infinitely greater than Thought in his conscious "I"; a consciousness which leaves every thought of the human mind completely destitute of any category, quality, or characteristic by which it might be *of* Thought in any sense. For Space-Being is clear consciousness, and beyond all Thought.

But with a consciousness of limitless I-being and *an infinite affirmation of Being* given in that consciousness, tantamount to limitless energy, it is clear that its expression or manifestation must be limitless also. Hence both in the Cosmos and in the "I," assuming duality for a moment, there

will be limitless emergence of "Forms." But the "form" of anything, within or without us, must always be due to isolating the *form* itself, as by itself, and as not in space; otherwise, it could not have *form*. The "form" is created first in our concept or judgment, and then imaged as *one* being!

Therefore, all that we are conscious of being manifested within us is also manifested without, viz., Matter, Order, Thought, and response to such; Light, Life, and Spirit, or as we prefer it, Space: Is: "I AM." The "motions" in the Universe and the "motions" in the Mind, *to which our judgments give form and individuality by ignoring space as a datum in such judgments*, are transfigured to our eyes and thought in the same Life-Light which springs from common Being. Science errs in assuming that Space is "dead," and that all the energies arising in space are also "dead." Our Bodies, Minds, and "Spirits" are expressed forth from Absolute-Space-Being; the same Life-light enveloping Mortal and Immortal in this world as on the Mountain side, and evermore transfiguring Mortal Body and Cloud of Light into "Son" and "Father." Indeed, what in our blindness we have called "Nothing" is "Whole-Being."

77. Peace and the Space-Consciousness.

And casting a brief glance on its practical benefit, it is also evident that such a consciousness of Whole-Being is absolutely necessary to our possession of that PEACE which Jesus claimed as distinctively His own. For without this consciousness, there

could be no cessation from Prayer, the hunger-cry of need. Absolute transfiguration can alone free the spirit of man from asking, seeking, knocking. Jesus had prayed for the presence of Moses, Elijah, and The Voice, to be so revealed to Himself and His Disciples. Similarly, Theology, Philosophy, and every form of Science will know no Peace until they stand in the consciousness of Whole-Being: Space-Being. Here is the eternal calm of Being: untroubled Rest, which has no relation to Motion: the identical Peace of Being which reciprocates with "I AM" peace. The world does not give it; nothing in the Universe can give it; nor when it is found, can anything in the universe take it away. It lies in the abyss of What-we-are.

Man is ever conscious that mere *isolated* personality cannot furnish such Peace. Only beyond all such "isolations" can we experience it. The Cosmos, just because we assume it to be cut off from Space, seems one vast, restless, rushing cataract of Energy speeding on endlessly and everywhere, with no apparent affinity to that deep yearning for perpetual peace which the "I AM" reveals. The Disciples on the Mountain feared the motion of the Cloud as separated, isolated Being from themselves, until they realised in its Light and Life and "I AM," the essential *Being* they themselves were. Jesus said, "Arise, and be not afraid." So similarly, "Let not your heart be troubled": "Peace I give unto you."

Not even He entered into this absolute Peace while under the clamorous wants of Body and Mind; not even after death, and resurrection; for

He was still "ascending to His Father and God." Only in His *Ascension*, the symbolical form of His elanguescence into Space-Being, was this peace His eternal experience. The disciples seem to have felt somewhat of its strength also, in their "It is good for us to be here."

Life for us all wakens up out of this space-consciousness in order to reveal this experience as the goal of our mortal being, and death surely can have no higher mission than to give us "exodus" into it.

PART III

THE PHILOSOPHY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

"And suddenly looking round about, they saw no one any more, save *Jesus only* with themselves."

CHAPTER IX

78. All Visions, in Vanishing, reveal True Visionless Being.

THE vision vanished in Night. This fact places the form and all the Forms of this Transfiguration among the Impermanences, or those Appearances which are forever arising out of the Permanent. The disciples no longer beheld the Objectivities, the Forms, the Apprehensibles. "And suddenly looking round about, they saw no one any more, save Jesus only with themselves." The effect upon them was as of the deep and vibrant darkness after the blinding flash of the lightning has just passed. The spirit within them felt thrust back into a more limited existence. Then the mental, not the spiritual powers, predominated. They were once more circumscribed within the senses and the understanding. But they had a remaining consciousness that a deeper "darkness" than Night had swallowed all that is usually called "spectral" back into itself. The Voice, the Cloud, Moses and Elijah, had become *spatial*, what in essence they *were*, even as Jesus Himself became spatial to the men of Emmaus when He was known to them "in the breaking of the bread." For all visions, in vanishing, reveal true visionless Being.

79. Transfiguration surpassing Life and Death.

"Suddenly looking round about." Just as people do at a deathbed, and say, "He is gone"! Swift, vibrant, unappearing darkness of the infinite, wide-open Vastitude! Which is yet to the world an empty "Blank" and Nullity, although persistently Being which is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." Which again leads us to reflect, that perhaps one of the benefits of the Transfiguration account is to give our weak conceptions a certain foothold amid what is by some dubiously called the "mystical," whence they are able to emerge into the transcending consciousness of Being, in which even the conceptions of Life and Death are superseded. For Space-Being never even hints of either Life or Death. To be conscious of being Space is to be conscious of existing where Life and Death are impossible. Which, again, is the exact consciousness we have of what-we-are; for we are sure that when Life and Death are past, we shall be more than they.

80. Space-Being in the Consciousness of Carlyle, Whitman, Shelley, Bergson, Höffding, Æschylus, and Pope.

How attractive are the thoughts of thinking-men upon this great subject! No contemplative mind leaves it untouched. We have already quoted a few, but nearly all the poets and philosophers express in some way their awe and wonder of Space-Being.

"Nature," says Carlyle, "will have us rest on her beautiful and awful bosom as if it were our secure

home, *on the bottomless boundless Deep*, whereon all human things fearfully and wonderfully swim." A consciousness which is echoed by Whitman, as he scans the beginnings of his being—"Afar down I see the huge first Nothing, I know I was even there." Shelley, on the other hand, finds little value in this consciousness, for—"When life and thought sprang forth, they burst the womb of inessential Nought." An "inessentiality," which Bergson deprecates, for he writes—"Philosophers have paid little attention to the idea of the Nought. And yet it is often the hidden spring, the invisible mover of philosophical thinking."

"Suso," says Höffding, called God, "a nameless Nothingness," while also the author of "German Theology" taught that the highest and only Good (*i.e.*, God) "must be called Nothing, by which is meant that it is nothing of all which created beings understand, know, think, or name." And for Æschylus, as quoted above, the ultimate consciousness of Being is of "an abyss of Nothingness," a statement reflected by Pope in his verse, "Ere Nature's self began to be 'twas one vast nothing all."

But, indeed, it is a universal consciousness. It is Space - Being that remains Real when all *Appearances* have vanished. Therefore we must hold it as a calamity to mankind when such a consciousness is held by the greatest as absolutely valueless. On the contrary, it would be wiser to look upon it as our foundation fact for *every value* which is given to the thought of man, and especially for Religion, Science, and Philosophy.

81. Day, Night, and Space increasingly deepen our Consciousness of Being.

Now it cannot but have occurred to the reader that there is a very real fitness in *Night* being associated with some of Christ's most notable experiences and actions. It was night, for example, when, to Nicodemus, He expounded the marvels of the New Birth and the Cosmic Love of God; when He prayed all night and walked upon the sea; when, after an exacting day's labours, He went out while it was yet night to pray in the desert, though all men were seeking for Him; when He was transfigured; and when He passed through the awful trial of Gethsemane.

Night, far more than Day, widens and deepens the human mind in its contemplations. "By night an atheist half believes a God," says Young in his "Night Thoughts"; and to Milton, night is "eldest of things," and "uncreated." The sun shuts us up to the earth; whereas Night opens out the vast grandeur of the heavens, and bears eye and soul far into the Illimitable (*cf.* Blanco-White's Sonnet "To Night"). Jesus may have felt that night should supply the atmosphere of His presence and work, when His disciples were to view Him on the higher planes of His being. The same consciousness of being about to deliver a world-important revelation, may have inspired Him to ascend in body to Mountain heights corresponding in sympathy with His soaring soul; the Sermon on the Mount being a parallel instance. Man's environment is never

without its revealing element for him; and his environment deepens its power over him according as the presence of *Day*, *Night*, or *Space-Being*, fills all his consciousness. For each of these has a corresponding phase within his inner experiences, Day answering to his intellectual, Night, to his sensational, and Space-Being to his spiritual "personality." And it will be found that Night gives a far more transcendent sublimity to our cosmic environment than Day, although, in turn, Night is swallowed up in the absolute transcendence of Space-Being. It was clearly necessary that Jesus should satisfy, if not exhaust, man's deepest consciousness, and this is not of Form but the Formless, not of Day and Night, which have form enough to the mind, but of Space; *that which never appears*, as Day and Night do.

This last truth seems almost self-evident when we reflect that both Day and Night can be held apart from ourselves and regarded objectively. We are conscious that *they* are not *us*. But it is impossible to regard Space in this way. We cannot find either in thought or consciousness, as we repeat for clarity's sake, a *division* between *What*-we-are and Space. Space does not *begin* where we *end*. There is no surface; no inside or outside. We cannot hold space in our thought as a marble is held in the hand. Nor can we place anything *in* Space, seeing that everything must be in space before we can think it to be. Moreover, we cannot *quantify* Space in this way. It ranks identically with the consciousness which we have of our "I Am" selves.

That is to say, we objectify our bodies. We objectify our conceptions and ideas. We clothe them in mental forms, and invest them with "personality," if necessary. We also have a consciousness of bulk and locality for all our sensations. But for our inmost "*awareness*" of What-we-are, there are no verges or edges; no centre or circumference; no mass; no substance, and no form absolutely. We cover up our ignorance by naming it "spirit," and leave it so. But *Space* has the same right to be so called.

82. "Spirit" and "Space" synonymous in Jesus' Consciousness.

Now Jesus has told us that "Spirit" is neither apprehensible by sense nor intellect. The world cannot receive the Spirit of truth because "it *beholdeth* Him not, neither *knoweth* Him." Nor eye nor mind can grasp "spirit," and the world seeks to grasp everything else by these means. And then, space not being apprehended in such a way, but only by consciousness, space is regarded as "nothing" at all!

Why, then, do we speak otherwise of the "Spirit" which Jesus promised? It is because He used the word "Him." This gives to our minds a qualified "personality" sufficient for our knowledge and reverence. But it is clear that the masculine term can only be metaphorical, and has nothing to do with the *essential* nature of God as "spirit." For if we take away all such metaphorical terms, we are left with just the same consciousness of this "Spirit"

as we have of Space. And Jesus had this consciousness of space in His "spirit"-term, for He said to the disciples, "Ye know Him (the spirit), for He abideth with you, and shall be *in* you." They had a consciousness of Spirit. And whenever we put this to the test, we find that the only consciousness we have of what is "within" us, and eternally "abiding" with us, is the consciousness of What-we-are; a pure consciousness of Space.

This is His teaching also to the Woman of Samaria. To meet her question as to *Where* men should worship, He directs her first to *What* or *Who* is to be worshipped, and then, for ease of understanding, calls this Being "Father," which is His covering term for our "Nature." From "Father" He leads her to the deeper consciousness of "Spirit," the name which best sets forth the Everywhere-ness of "God." And this is His answer to her. God was Everywhere-Being; Space: and had no *locality*. He must be worshipped in her consciousness of Space. Hence worship merges into Objectless Soliloquy.

83. Philosophy and Science trend towards Space as their Base-fact.

In this way we ascertain that when Jesus speaks of "spirit," the *content* of the term, in absolute truth, is pure Space. Indeed apart from the connotations of space-being in His mind, Jesus could not have truthfully said, "God is Spirit." For the term "God" must satisfy all that we mean by the Formless, the Quantityless, the Qualityless, the Limitless, as well as the Permanent and the Real.

He must be as truly all we call "Nothing" as all we call Something! And Space alone, as a consciousness, satisfies this supreme demand.

And if this is true for Religion, and clearly it is basal for all forms of Religion, it is equally true for Philosophy and Science. Prof. Ed. Caird could say—"One of the best definitions that has been given philosophy is 'clear self-consciousness'" (*Comte*, p. 89). The conscious "I": Clearness unstained and unstainable; what Shakespeare calls "Man's glassy essence." Science also is to-day making strenuous efforts to trace her beginning from the infinitely exiguous; the Matterless Ether; the substanceless Substance! There is power behind the consciousness of men which far exceeds any force or energy known to us, which will press them home to this consciousness of Space-Being. Our "little systems" have their day. The stupendous transfiguration of all "within" and all "without" us, shining, as it seems, in ineffable splendours, and stretching through long ages, slowly but inexorably fades and disappears, and like the Three Apostles, men come to look around about on the "Blank," the "*tabula rasa*," and see "nothing" save "Jesus only." Being abides. And the highest truth He ever uttered, concerning Himself or any other, was simply "I AM": of which there is no possible consciousness save of "Void"-Being. But, how very far this is from the "Nothing" out of which our theological "God" has created and made our theological "Universe"!

84. Infallible Truth only found in the "I Am" Consciousness.

It must now be evident to the reader that every interpretation of Man and his universe, *i.e.*, every serious doctrine or Truth, can only be *infallibly* true in as far as such interpretation is founded upon the consciousness which we possess of *what-we-are.* To that consciousness Jesus carried it and there He left it. *He put His "I Am" consciousness against everything thinkable, as its true reference.* If we seek Truth He declares, "I am" the Truth. If we seek Life, "I AM" the Life. He refers every question that can arise in the human mind to this "Nothing"-consciousness of the "I" for an answer. Contrariwise, Religion, Theology, Philosophy, Science, Art—all appeal to the *content* of the Universe for Light, and satisfaction to Reason. He alone appeals to that which has no content, either for Thought or Sense, and in His "I AM" finds every mystery and shadow abolished to the "clearest of the clear," as Tennyson said of his consciousness of himself (*Memoir*, i. 320).

There is, therefore, a deep significance in the closing part of the Transfiguration that the disciples should be startled into looking suddenly round about them to discover that *Jesus only* stood beside them. It was the crisis of this wonder. Henceforth He was to be their sole Light. Moses, Elijah and the Past had vanished. From Jesus alone, undiluted by any other light, they must receive every doctrine of Life and Spirit. This was His high claim, "Follow

Me," "Hear Him." Alas, that they and the Church should have failed to do so.

And in order to show how our Christian Religion might have been formulated to the world, in far other and truer symbols than it has yet known, if "Jesus only" had been followed in His teaching, we may venture, as we are able, to give instances of this statement.

85. Jesus' Teaching on Personality, Sin, Freedom, Origin and Descent of Man, Evil, Sinlessness, Creation, Time.

Perhaps, it is in the eighth chapter of "Saint John," to which we have already referred, that we find the "I AM" teaching so clearly set forth. In connection with it He discusses the great questions of—

Personality.
Sin.
Freedom Absolute.
The Origin and Descent of Man.
The Origin of Murder, Lust, and the "Liar."
Deathlessness and Sinlessness.
Knowledge of God.
Creation.
Time.

As beliefs, these existed in certain defined forms, in the minds of the Pharisees with whom He conversed regarding them. And speaking in general terms, their *conception* of Personality was the same as has been embodied in the thoughts

of mankind from the beginning of time, and which is yet enamelled in, and dominant throughout, every learned and unlearned essay on the subject. It is this view of personality which constitutes the grand dividing line between the consciousness and thought of Jesus and all other teachers of mankind. It is the line between Truth and Falsehood.

Therefore, we should perhaps caution the reader here that, in the following pages we now leave the consideration of Absolute or Whole-Being for the ordinary ground of *Relativity*. We view the ideals of "GOD," Man, the Universe, as History has developed such conceptions as distinct, apart, isolated "persons" and "things," and attempt to show the attitude of Jesus towards them in His teaching, governed as we believe His Life and teaching to have been by His consciousness of Absolute or Whole-Reality. And we do so under the conviction that all future advance in either sacred or secular knowledge must find its power and direction from that Consciousness. He was conscious that there was *nothing* hid that would not be revealed, and He spoke in the absolute sense, as He does also when He affirms Himself to be "The Light of the *World*." All Revelation, all Knowledge, all Light, are bound up for mankind in His conscious "I AM." He knew of no chasms lying between Religion, Science, Philosophy, Art, History, and similar inventions of Thought.

86. The "God" of Metaphysics and Agnosticism.

And in this place we plead to be excused if we repeat some of the ideas already stated on "personality." We think it is necessary in order to understand better the doctrinal and ethical teaching of Jesus of which we now treat. Hence the Ontological, Cosmological and Teleological forms of argument which metaphysicians have set forth in order to reach a "Person" whom it could be possible to call "God," with at least the same *certainty* as we speak of ourselves. But in all such arguments, as they begin with conceptions, so they end with conceptions. There is never anything concrete to stand upon. "God" continues to be an abstract *image* of our minds, and an abstraction which shades constantly into the dimness of a receding consciousness which is usually interpreted as certifying the existence of Someone, or Something, which can only be "God"! But this consciousness never has a concrete content, as we have said. It rests upon a presupposition! And it is this fact which has made the statement of the Agnostics far too positive to be pleasant, viz, that "God" cannot be known, and that all worship must be worship of an Unknown, and consequently, this Unknown as Darkness and not Light! It is also without Life, and indeed, is the summation of all the negations of everything we have been led to count of value, absolutely.

Similarly this space-consciousness has been looked upon as illusive in its message, and not to be relied

upon for truth. Seeing that it gives no *Form* to reason, and nothing for reasoned *Thought* to lay foundations on, being only a consciousness of "Blank" or Space-Being, it has been despised and rejected of men. Moreover, no one seems to have believed that Jesus had any light to shed upon this first of subjects; and when such key-terms as the "Universe," "Conscience," the "Moral Order," the phenomenal inclusion of "Mind" as well as "Matter" have failed to give satisfaction, the question has been held to be simply "Mystery," and only possible to poets and mystics.

87. Jesus as the Light of the World.

We hold that if Jesus is "The Light of the World," as He maintained, His teaching must satisfy the human mind regarding Personality. Otherwise, He must be convicted of a fraudulent announcement. And therefore it does not surprise us that He has made His teaching on Personality the very corner-stone of that teaching. As we have seen, He equates His Person, His "I Am," against, or with, everything in the universe, and with the universe itself, by representative selections such as "Life," "Truth," "Door," "Shepherd," "Resurrection," "All-power," etc.

When, therefore, He makes the absolute statement of Himself as "The Light of the World," as One in whom no shadow of darkness exists; and whose Light cannot make a shadow, and when the Pharisees counter this assertion by the words, "Thou bearest witness of thyself; thy

witness is not true" (John viii. 13), we note at once the difference between His and their convictions about Personality. They demand a witnessing voucher beside his own for a man's statement about himself, while He, on the contrary, holds that a man's consciousness about himself, and his words expressing that consciousness, are true, irrespective of any other support. "Even if I bear witness of myself, my witness is true." A fact which, when taken universally, means that every man's consciousness of himself, and his expression of that consciousness is true; is Absolute Light that has no possible darkness in it, or attending it.

Now, this is a fact which the common experience of all men confirms. Nothing can be so absolutely true to any one as the simple consciousness of himself. "As sure as I live." And we are always surer of our own being than about the being of any other. This consequently is rock-fact. The "I AM" consciousness is infallibly true. It follows then that the *content* found in this consciousness will carry with it our deepest faith in its reality. Now, the *content* of this consciousness has been affirmed by theologians and philosophers to be "spirit," "soul," "ego," "will," "feeling," and many others, all of which are false. For no person is conscious of *any content* in what he Is. To quote Dr Sanday once more, "Everything begins with a blank." The sole content of What-we-are, in the deepest deep of ourselves, can only be spoken of as that of Space. But as being

What-we-are, we are bound to believe that it is true being, the surest reality possible to us.

88. The Judgment "I" not a Generalisation, but fundamental for all other Judgments of the Human Mind.

Jesus then shows the Pharisees that the chasm between His and their view of His personality is due to difference of *Judgment.* His judgment was, "I am the light of the world." They judged Him as untrue. He then points out that they judge "after the flesh," whereas He was judging no man. He was only judging Himself from the "I"-consciousness. Their judgment was founded on the data of common phenomena; His judgment was based on His "I"-consciousness which is not a mere generalisation, being non-rational; although all other judgments are subordinate to it.

Therefore He could say truly, "If I judge, my judgment is true." For no judgment of man can be true regarding personality if it is contrary to the "I am" judgment of that person himself. It is the *infallible* judgment. It is outside of all possible contradiction, and therefore constitutes the starting ground for all Religion, all true Philosophy, and all Science. All convictions or doctrines concerning these must rest on this absolute basis.

And, consequently, as the Pharisees judged Him according to the phenomena which was given them in Sense and Understanding, or "according to the flesh," they could not be other than wrong. The same falls to be said concerning all the arguments

of theologians and philosophers who have judged, on the same phenomenal data, such generalisations as *God*, *Soul*, *Freedom*, *Immortality*, etc.

89. Jesus transfigures *Cognitional* Terms in light of the *Conscious* Ones.

And as with identic *being*, so Jesus speaks in similar words regarding identic *knowledge*, "If ye knew me, ye would know my Father also." "Even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father." The terms seem to imply knowledge of relative and separate beings, whereas it is really a consciousness of identic being affirmed in the face of conceptions which assert difference. For we are to remember that no *name* covers our consciousness of the "I" of personality. It is not possible. The human mind forms judgments, gives them figure and vitality, images the "Self" as what it was in the past, what it is to-day, and what it hopes to be in the future, and so describes the "self" as different being in different times. But this is mere fancy, and the illusion of metaphors and conceptions. The actual consciousness of Being; "I"; never changes in any way. So, in this case, we have to realise that the terms "father" and "son," are individualised to suit common ideas, and so used by Jesus to teach identic knowledge of identic being. *He transfigures the terms*, and the *conceptions* underlying them, into a higher *consciousness* of what being is.

He made another statement regarding His personality which must have seemed strange to

the Pharisees. "My record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go." Being! "I"! Its *whence* and *whither*. What is permanent! What is in the Flow. This is absolute knowledge. The consciousness of the "I" is a consciousness of omniscience. And it is a fact that all our knowledge, and every possibility of such, fall far short of what we are conscious of in the "I." All knowledge is swallowed up in *that* which knows, even as difference of personalities is.

Jesus knew the Origin of His Being, and He knew its end. This is the same consciousness which He expresses later on in His discussion, in the words, "Before Abraham was, I AM." Therefore He was before all time; for it is an absolute statement with no limit in it. And again our own consciousness sustains His, for no one has the least consciousness of Time in the content of his "I." It is a timeless consciousness. In it we have but clear "blank," devoid of all possible measurements as from point to point, or of "durational" lapsing, as if Being depended on *process* for its existence.

Some of Jesus' disciples afterward spake of this consciousness in terms which they may have heard Him use, viz., "I am the First and the Last." In both expressions, it is notable that there is an absence of present time. His "I am" includes all we name as Past or Beginning, and all we conceive as Future, but there is no intermediate Present, as conceived coming out of the Past and travelling on into the Future. For this was not required. When He says "I," *the First and Last are bound up in it.* That is to

say, it is a consciousness of Being which swallows up all *conception of Time* absolutely. It reduces Time solely to a judgment which is "after the flesh," or one based in phenomena, and renders the conception of duration, as usually conceived, also impossible.

And again, the testimony of our own consciousness is with Him. Firsts and Lasts, Beginnings and Endings, are all absent in our "I." We have no hint of ever having *begun*, or of having been *created*, and when we are faithful to the inner voice, we have no difficulty in detecting that both the word "Creation," and the word "Time," are only conceptions, mind-begotten things, and in no wise founded in the rock of consciousness.

CHAPTER X

90. The Instability of all Conceptive Knowledge.

JESUS, therefore, has no support for Kant's assertion that *What*-we-are is a "Thing"; a limited, lonely, isolated One, nor for Hegel's "Being and Nothing" as emerging into an identical process of Unit-"Becoming" which is to be the matrix of all things. For we are never conscious of *What*-we-are as a "Thing" among other "things," nor of having become, nor yet of becoming. All such terms imply *place* for "thing," and *motion* for becoming, and these mean Space. These are philosophical, brain-built entities, wrestled out of reasoning and judgments, spun from the "phenomena" of "Mind." They are judgments "after the flesh." We are accustomed to speak with such data of our bodies and minds, but our unvarying and unaltering consciousness of "I AM" is beyond any other predication.

Resting thus, in the "I"-consciousness as Whole, Absolute, Truth, or Reality, it is clear that we cannot allow *any conception* whatever to be absolutely true. For example, no conception of "God" is ever satisfactory to any one for long. No conception of *anything* remains true perpetually. All human knowledge, which is composed of conceptions, is a

vast ocean forever on the move. The Universe, and all it contains, is the same. Therefore the Ancient Philosophers believed it to be absolutely true that "All Flowed." They were mistaken. The consciousness of *What*-we-are asserts the contrary. It is not in relation to anything; it does not change; never was created; never can be decreated; and this is not a conception, or an ideal, or a generalisation, or a guess. For our having the consciousness of "I am" as Space, identical with the Space of the Universe, we merely obtain corroboration from all our senses, and all that moves in our "minds," as well as in consciousness itself, that although all that is in heaven and earth may and shall pass away, What-we are as space-being cannot pass. Herbert Spencer was right. "Eternal, Uncreated—anteceding all Creation, if creation has taken place, and all Evolution, if evolution has taken place . . . without Origin or Cause, infinite space has ever existed and must ever exist." That is to say, while the "I" is pure consciousness of affirmed, unrelated being, all conceptions or judgments arising from it are by construction relativities (§ 51).

91. Jesus Interprets "God" finally through Consciousness Alone.

We have to remind ourselves of these facts once again in order to impress upon our minds that when we follow the teaching of "Jesus only," and listen to His interpretation of the world-old ideal of "GOD," we finally get no *conception* from Him, but only a *Consciousness.* He, indeed, utters words such as

"GOD is SPIRIT," but these words have no content of *conception.* They are an Intuition which Kant called "blind." The human mind finds them "empty," because both terms "GOD" and "SPIRIT" are beyond conceiving. They are abstractions, in short. There is nothing in them for mind to grasp by. They are simply spatial, and surpass all reason, being solely pure consciousness of Being. But it is out of this consciousness that Seers, Prophets, and all the God-contemplating, have hewn their conceptions of "God" as *one*, as *related*, as an *Other*-Being; and it is for this reason that, as Max-Müller puts it, "No word has so many meanings as "God." And we can discern that such an absolute consciousness as "IS," "I AM," has absolute capacity for supplying all the material of our conceptions, or "categories," and therefore is inexhaustible. In other words, it is from this consciousness that we get the *conceptions* of Omniscience, Omnipotence, Omnipresence, and all the other "attributes" which we conceive to belong to "GOD."

92. The Term "Father" eliminates all Old Testament God-Names.

Now we find the Old Testament "attributes" of God, such as El, Shaddai, Elohim, Jahwe, Lord of Hosts, and others, entirely ignored by Jesus. He selected one conception only for a temporary Organon to His "I AM" consciousness, viz., the word "FATHER." We naturally ask, Why? His answer is given in the very fact that He uses no other name, and for the office of Prayer, teaches us

to address God as "Our Father." This implies that He considered it to be a conception which is fuller than any other of the *Being* of His inexpressible consciousness. His silence regarding the Old Testament conceptions of Deity marks His conviction that all these terms and their content of conception were fulfilled and surpassed by the term "Father."

And again, our consciousness assents to His position to the full. For when we take, say, the attribute "Almighty," which in all religions is the earliest to be affirmed regarding "GOD," we find it lacking the very kernel of true *Might*, viz., the great passion of LOVE. But we find this easily in the conception, "Father." The "Almighty" God creates and makes creatures external to Himself, as an artificer, and not out of His own Being, which is the higher function of Fatherhood. The Almighty *breathes* life into His handiwork, but not His own life. It is "created" life. But uncreated life is what is most characteristic of fatherhood. The true father gives *himself*, his own life, in his begotten, and not merely a system of energies. He is transfigured in his child. And it is clear that if Jesus had not thrown aside all the God-Names of the Old Testament He would have failed to interpret the conception of Higher Being as it lay in His, and as it does yet in our, Consciousness. The term "Father" sweeps all the Old Testament attributes of God within itself, and both transfigures and transcends them.

But while the term "Father" expresses a higher conception of "God" or of Absolute Being, we must not forget that it is yet only an approximation to

the absolute truth of the "I AM" consciousness in us. For as we must repeat, *All* concepts are defective in absolute truth.

Consequently, our consciousness of Being, "I AM," really transcends all ancient and modern conceptions of "God." For the very fact of masculinity being bound up in the word "Father," is a proof of its defections. We cannot find a consciousness of sex in our "I"-consciousness, nor even of "life," nor of "spirit." It is pure "blank" space, as we must always remind ourselves.

Therefore, Jesus never essays to teach about "GOD" so much as about His "Father." And He was on sure ground when He told the Pharisees that they did not know the Father, and, as a consequence, did not know Himself. They had *never* known God (verse 55), nor had their nation, nor had the world, as He asserted in His prayer, "O righteous Father, the *world* hath not known Thee" (John xvii. 25).

In strict fact, the world could *not* know "God" by attributes, conceptions, or categories. For they all point back to the higher consciousness which gives them birth. If, for example, we say, The sun is, the moon is, the universe is, Man is, the Father is, the Son is; all these nouns are *concepts*, but what is common to each is the "IS," the affirmation of *Being* out of which they are formed. And this affirmation is from consciousness alone. It is not a concept, category, or attribute. But it is undoubtedly the basis of all such, seeing that none of them could exist without it.

93. "Your Father the Devil."

Now, this explanation of "God"-attributes is essential to our understanding the right point of view of Jesus' words about the "Devil," the "Prince of this World," the "Father" of Lies. The best minds of our times are dissatisfied with the current aspect of the "God"-Name, as well as with the personalising of Evil as a Being distinct from "God," and as *another* Being. And it is the fact that while the personality of the "Father in Heaven" becomes more intense in outline and character in the minds of men, the personality of "The Devil" simultaneously tends more and more towards a vanishing point.

Therefore we have given the above reasons for distinguishing between the infallibility of the truth of our consciousness of "God" and *the imperfect truth of all our conceptions whatsoever*, in order to enable us to say that every *conception* of "personality" of either "God" or "Man" is more or less untrue, and that Jesus was, for several reasons, as much justified in speaking to the Pharisees of their "Father the Devil" as of His own "Father in Heaven." Neither *can* be absolutely true, under such limited terms, but there is a sense in which both terms are necessary in the interests of human understanding.

For the thinkers of the world, as Jesus knew it, and all the historical peoples beyond His immediate knowledge in His day, had a fixed belief in the truth of Relativity as being, in itself, an absolute truth. Just as the religious and the devout continuously affirmed the relativity of Life or Death, Good and Evil, virtue

and vice, peace and war, so the contemplative affirmed the relativity of the One *and* the Many, the Absolute *and* the Particular, the Finite *and* the Infinite, and held such relativities as the last thing to be said about such matters! Consequently, the extreme of every "relative" naturally ended in a personality, just as the imagination of man has personalised every object in the Cosmos. The Good thus became "God," and the Evil became "Satan." And the teaching method of Jesus was always to begin from the beliefs which were dominant in the minds of the people, and gradually substitute for them truths of a higher category. He therefore was impelled, in the interests of His great work, to accept, for the time being, *their* ideas of "God," and of "Beelzebub," and to bring *His* truth to bear upon such Relativities till they might melt away under its power and light.

He therefore spoke of the "God" of Moses, and the "Beelzebub" of the common belief, and from that ground ascended to the higher truth of His own consciousness, in which no such Relativities ever existed. In the same way, and no doubt for the same purpose, He spoke of diseases as "demons," and attributed a devil-father to the Pharisees, and compared "God" and "Mammon," as two masters to be served. To Himself, no such division in Being is ever stated as *absolute* Truth. As He rose higher and higher in His teaching towards His "I AM" affirmation of Being, He also more and more eliminated all the imaginary "Relativities" which men have invented. For in this "I am" conscious-

ness, as every one can ascertain for himself, there are no divisions or differences in *Being* of any kind, but solely a spatial affirmation, "Is," which knows no relativity whatever. What we confidently divide up into Personal and Impersonal Being, to suit our limited vision of things, is unknown in our "I AM" consciousness. Space is neither Personal nor Impersonal, Good or Evil, One or Many, Finite or Infinite, nor indeed *related* to anything. There is only *absolute affirmation of Being* which engulfs all such divisions, as it will yet engulf all heaven and earth, according to Jesus' reading of the Truth. Therefore, when we say "Space," we are nearer to an absolute expression for "God" than is possible by saying anything else. Besides, it has the unique advantage of being absolutely concrete, as evident to sense as to understanding, and not a mere ideal or "presupposition." But the I-consciousness being so spatially boundless in its "whence" and "whither," it is very evident that it affords scope for an infinity of conceptions regarding it. Hence, modern psychologists find it to be not merely one personality but many such. Its duality and triplicity are commonplaces. But there is no reason to stop at triplicity! For just as every possible conception has been predicated of "God," and Unit-Personality has fought with His Multiple-Personality through all ages, so may the I-consciousness be treated. The seed of personality lies in the I-consciousness, and, according to the possible judgments of it, so may there issue forth corresponding "personalities" to such

judgments. "Personalities" are always brain-begotten entities.

It is reasonable then to believe that Jesus used the name "Father" as a divine "Person," because in all its connotations it was higher in truth than any of the other "God" terms known to Him, except that of "Spirit," which transcends all sex-meanings and limitations of *unit*-being. But if we admit the necessity of the "Father"-name for the higher "God"-connotations, we are compelled also to accept the "Father"-name for the connotations of Evil. Both terms live by the same licence. They are merely personalised types which are expressive of the general human conception of what is, so far, absolute Good and absolute Evil. And they give a presentation of human judgments which can be easily grasped by reason and understanding, and so are rendered beneficial to human life and conduct. And as long as the vast masses of the world's inhabitants persist in viewing all things on a fixed basis of Relationship, instead of through the "I AM" consciousness, the *Personal* "Devil," "Liar," "Father of Lies," etc., will be as indispensable and reasonable as the "Father"-name for "God."

All such expressions, therefore, in the mouth of Jesus, as "Son of Man," "Son of God," "Children of Abraham," "Seed of Abraham," "Father, the Devil," and many others similar, are only to be held as true, in as far as He Himself held them to be true, viz., temporally, and as far as Relationship is true. For example, He said, with regard to the Pharisees as

affirming their relatedness to Abraham, "I know that ye are Abraham's seed" (verse 37). But this was only *so far* true to Him. For He again negates this relationship on higher grounds. "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham." They were only nominally Abraham's children.

94. All Jesus' "God-Words" widen upwards to Whole-Being or "I Am."

We can now say more definitively that a careful and comprehensive study of the Four Gospels would show that Jesus' method of teaching Absolute, or "God" knowledge, was first to take up the principal ideals obtaining in the minds of men, and from which they derived their power over Life and Conduct, and then to exhaust them in still higher, until all such relational ideals receded upwards into pure consciousness of Being, and rested finally in Absolute Space-Truth, or Truth of their own conscious "I AM." Thus His term "Father" seems to be used for all relational purposes, and "Spirit" for both the relational and absolute.

Yet, clearly, neither term rests in a basis which consciousness could confidently assure us as perfectly concrete. The "Father" term is inadequate to define our full consciousness of "God;" and "Spirit" is quite abstract, although it was evidently intended by Himself, as by all the great teachers before His day, to embrace a higher ideal of Eternal Being than "Father." But neither has a clear testimony in our consciousness of concrete existence.

Yet, in reading the Four Gospels, we see Him accepting the common name "God," which of itself is wholly abstract, although serviceable enough; then He associates the term "Father" with it, and again absorbs that name in the "Spirit"-term of His later teaching. "God" is then both "Father" and "Spirit" in definition. But, as already said, in none of these terms have we Truth *so* absolute as we get it in our own "I AM" Truth. And as it is Truth He seeks to establish, and not merely names for "God," He finally falls back upon the highest concrete consciousness of concrete Truth possible to the human being, and affirms absolute reality in His own "I AM" reality. The spheres governed by the terms "Father" and "Spirit," and "God," are then absorbed in the "I AM" truth, which alone is based in the absolutely concrete. Hence, the "Way," the "Truth," the "Life," the "Father," the "Spirit," and several others, are all taught as concreted in Himself, "I"; for he who has seen Him has seen the *Father;* and He breathes the *Spirit* upon His disciples as consciously His *own Spirit* (John xx. 22). "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." The "Spirit," as a term for Reality, is concreted at last in His own conscious "I." In short, He absorbs *all* that was meant by the people by "God," "Father," and "Spirit," in His own "I," which is the absolute reality as testified by our own consciousness, and all abstractions vanish from His teaching, henceforth, and "*God-Man*" becomes an *absolutely* concrete fact for the human mind, beyond all controversy. To doubt this fact would belie the consciousness

in everyone, "I AM," out of which the Ideals, "God," "Father," and "Spirit" have sprung.

95. Jesus' Final Charge to His Church.

It is to this absolute ground of Thought and conviction that Jesus then leads His opponents, the Jews. And from it, He clearly aims at settling for all time the *question of Sin.*

Sin is created by a judgment. But Jesus showed them that His and their foundation of judgment was as profoundly different as were the "Above" from the "Beneath" (John viii. 23). The entire system of their religious beliefs was consequently as far from His own as their "Devil"-Father was from His "God"-Father. If, then, they followed lies, and were liars (verse 55), there was no common ground for a common judgment upon either His or their own conduct. Which of them could convict Him of sin? (verse 46). Why not rather believe Him when He spoke the Truth? If they would but *know* the Truth, they would be free, *even from all Sin*, as He himself was. They would die sinless (verse 24). And as this treatment of the subject of sin by our Lord is all important, we should note that sinlessness is obtained by believing Him to *be* so, through truth of consciousness, rather than by another Being pardoning Man on the ground of some condition supplied by Man. For, so long as they believed that they were sinners they were slaves, and not free (John viii. 34). They must realise in themselves the "I"-consciousness, for *in this there is no knowledge of sin.* It is pure, space-pure consciousness. It is the spatial

poverty of "spirit," the entire destitution of anything in the "spirit," beyond all judgments of "good" or "evil," which Jesus equated with "the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. v. 3).

"I said therefore unto you (verse 21), that ye shall die in your sins: for except ye believe that (or what) *I Am*, ye shall die in your sins" (verse 24).

Jesus is not, be it noted, asking them to believe WHO he is. There is no personality implied in the Greek words. When they ask Him WHO He is in the following verse, He gives the same reference to Impersonal Being; and the reason is that the true "I am" consciousness cannot be translated in terms of either personality or impersonality. The consciousness that Being is whole, and blots out all conceptions of personality, renders sin inconceivable except as created by man's thoughts of man. "Out of the heart of man" evil judgments arise.

But in the knowledge of this "I AM" we find stainless Being, and pure Origin (if we must have beginnings), and unsullied Descent (if we must have genealogical status), and Being, which it is the absolute impossible to do sin against. For in it all Relationship is abolished—*Fathers* who might accuse sons, *Judges* who might condemn sinners or breakers of laws, *Ones* which might flaunt their unity in the faces of the Many, *Finites* which might defy Infinites, or *Matters* which should quarrel with the *Minds*. And with reverence be it said, the isolated "God" of the ages of increasing conceptions, the "God" "up in heaven," also disappears. Being is WHOLE. The "I AM" has no consciousness of

being made of bits, of possible division in any possible way, or of being derived from some other being, or of falling into decay, or of decreasement in any sense. All these terms of relationship lie far below the "I AM." And when we know this consciousness in Jesus, we can understand why He was so confident that he was without sin. For it always bears the conscious one above every system of Law, or moral codes, or absolute separation from the Other, out of which all sin and adverse judgments, man against man, are created. The Space-Consciousness is one absolutely stainless. There is no sin, or the faintest similitude of error at the heart of things. *And it is here where we realise that the Universe never has been afflicted with the Darkness of Sin and Death which mankind has attributed to it; and that we also know, as Jesus did, that when Heaven and earth pass away, the Unchanging, Eternal Being we all are, will still remain even as it has always been.* To know through our consciousness, our "I AM," is to die sinless, in the same way that Jesus and "Jesus only," has revealed to us.

96. Sinlessness only Found in the I Am Judgment.

And in this connection it is very instructive, with reference to this view of sin in the mind of Jesus, that He has said so little against sin as compared with other religious leaders of the world. The Old Testament, for instance, is one prolonged, fierce, stretched - out serpentine Hiss, from beginning to end, upon man and his sins. But when Jesus

leaves the earth, He commits no message to His Church of sin-denunciation against anyone, although of all men in the world He had most reason to be denunciatory. As He came not to judge or condemn the world, so *He does not leave any charge to His Church to preach against Sin*, a function which many think the first belonging to the pulpit. He sends them into the world *as* the Father sent Himself, not to condemn but to save the world. He breathes the same spirit upon them which was given to Himself. "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." Therefore, as all authority over sin was committed to Himself, so *He left the condemnation of sin upon the world solely to the judgment of the church itself.* "Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted; whosoever sins ye retain they are retained." A charge first laid upon Peter (Matt. xvi. 19), as between one individual and another, and again, upon the Church (Matt. xviii. 18; John xx. 23), as between it and the world. Sin thus was left not as between God and man, but between man and man, the "*Man*" being its final judge at last. Jesus gives the *creation*, the *denunciation*, and the *de-creation* of sin in the world, to the conditions of judgment in men themselves. Just where it always has been. "Make disciples of all nations," "preach the Gospel." That is His one charge to individuals and to His Church; for upon Love, and Truth, and Life it must be built, or otherwise the gates of Hades will prevail against it. Sin henceforth is confined to the sphere of relatedness; and is forgiven, not in Heaven, but on "EARTH" (Mark xi. 10). It is

forgiven, that is to say, where it was first created. "From *within*, out of the *heart* of Men" (Mark vii. 21); men who judged "after the flesh," and not after the "I AM" consciousness.

97. The Transfiguration a Sinless Scene.

This power, which abolishes sin, is seen on the Mount of Transfiguration, as the same power which abolishes Death in the Resurrection, and all mortality in the Ascension; *the power, viz., which is not from above, but resident in the "I Am" of Jesus.* The disciples had no consciousness of anything on the Mount save of Glory and Goodness. No shadow of darkness intruded there; it was a sinless scene. "I Am" the Resurrection; "I Am" the Sinless. He brought Life and Immortality to light.

98. The Child as Sinless in Christ's Consciousness.

Sin, as a consequence, has no possible reference to an Eternal Judge, or as being ineradicable from the Universe. It originates in and rests solely on judgments which are on the earth, in the heart of man; and it also takes end there. The child has nothing of it until he has developed the power within himself of judging. Consequently, the child was rightly taken by Jesus as the truest type of the sinless thing, "the kingdom of heaven." And what men should do is to regard the entire system of Sin-Conceptions as set forth in the Old Testament, and in Creeds and Confessions of East and West, with all the past teaching that has been based

upon these, as not sustained in the doctrine of the Son of Man.

99. αἰωνίου ἁμαρτήματος.

There is indeed an apparent reference to sin as being "eternal" (Mark iii. 29), but it is only generally understood as such. It is not really "eternal," in the meaning usually attached to that word. We have shown that "eternity" is a *conception* created solely in the mind of man and unrecognised by Jesus; the conception as of a faint reflex or "projection" of the Deep of Space in Man. For in the conscious "I" there is neither an affirmation of beginning nor of ending. Being is simply affirmed. But having neither consciousness of beginning nor of ending, the affirmation of Being, when judged under a conception, is naturally of the form of "eternity," *i.e.*, the conception or, more correctly, consciousness of unbeginning and unending being. "Eternal," therefore, as applied to sin, is absurd, for sin begins, and what begins, ends. Consequently, the term "eternal" in the saying, "is guilty of an eternal sin," cannot have the meaning of "never-ending." For sin has both beginning and ending, in the nature of an act. It cannot therefore be referred to as "eternal," as we usually understand that word. And it really ends when it is forgiven under a new judgment by the aggrieved person.

"Hath never forgiveness," therefore, is only an assumed *conception* of sin, which does not refer to the only Judge of Sin, Jesus. The conception was

the most suitable to His audience, and to His argument, and arose, "because they said, He hath an unclean spirit" (verse 30.) He affirms Himself to be the sole and only judge of sin, and therefore the one who alone can pardon or forgive sin. Now, the Scribes said, "He hath an unclean spirit." How, then, was it possible to forgive sin, if He Himself were the evil one? By this Spirit in Himself He cast out evil from men, forgave sin, and raised the dead. By the same spirit men were called upon to forgive and so end sin. If, then, they persisted in regarding this Spirit as Satan, there was no other Pardoner besides. Sin so conceived must stand without any possible One to forgive it.

Again, the difficulty of understanding this passage in its true light is complicated by the way Jesus argues *from the position of the Scribes*, with *their* mental view and concepts for His material of controversy. He goes upon their belief that He, Jesus, and the spirit by which He and their sons cast out demons, were two distinct personalities or relationships, and *forever* separate as such. He therefore declares that sin against the Jesus-Person has unlimited forgiveness (Matt. xii. 31, 32), for in the sphere of relationship both sin and its forgiveness are possibilities. But sin against the Spirit, as within their sons and within Himself, when they cast out devils, does not come within the sphere of forgiveness in any possible way, *because Spirit is not in the sphere of relationship.* It is "I AM" to both "sons" and Jesus, in which no sin can exist.

100. Sin has no Reference to an Absolute Being.

Sin, by its very nature, is to be viewed as a limited act done against another, who is thereby limited in the fact that that other is not himself. *All sin, therefore, can only refer to conceived limited beings.* But as soon as we realise "God" as Whole-Being with all being, and, in the teaching of Jesus, *identical with all being under the aspect of "Spirit,"* and correctly spoken of under *any* personal form, whether it be that of "child," "Jesus," or "Him that sent me" (Mark ix. 37), we are carried beyond the sphere in which sin is possible, because there we cannot truthfully conceive Being to be separate from another, with such relationship between them as could be ruptured by an act, and possibly healed over once more by "forgiveness." The term "eternal," as applied by Jesus to sin, is thus a true *conception*, and is only based on man's view of "eternity."

CHAPTER XI

101. Sin a Human Conception created in Human Judgments Alone.

We are justified therefore, in viewing the whole system of sin, as *men* through all ages have *conceived it*, to lie entirely within the region of the temporal, the contingent, and the limited, and at bottom to be based solely on the creating judgment of man. It began in a judgment, and it ends in a judgment. It floats in the great Deep of What man is, as clouds float in the deep of Heaven, appearing and disappearing as the conceptions of humankind vary and change. Jesus referred it for judgment to Himself, the Son of Man, *but to no other.* And, therefore, in the transfiguration scene, even when visualised under the limited "beings" of Clouds, Son, and human persons, no reference to sin is hinted at; all sin being obliterated by the passion of Love which alone suffused that atmosphere, and in which it was only "good" to abide. It even vanishes out of the presence of "God" when conceived as a Fatherhood.

But we must be careful to notice that this obliteration of sin is a negation which is really brought about by the transfiguration of the Human Mind, as

typified in Jesus, and by its being placed in light which has no relating darkness. There is such an atmosphere of goodness surrounding the three apostles as renders it impossible for sin to be a thought to them. The only consciousness in Peter, who seems to express the mind of the other two, is of a supremely good and perfect human society with Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. Why should it not remain permanently upon the earth? "Let us build three tabernacles."

102. No Sin in the Cosmos.

This inabilility to have either a consciousness or conception of evil, where a sense of goodness was so overpowering, has a strong reflex in the domain of animated nature where animals and all living things, in air and earth and sea, fulfil their existence quite free of the oppressive consciousness of wrong which governs the brain-begotten concepts of men. Farther down the scale of being, this inability is totally absent in merely sentient things, and still more so in the non-vital and grossly material. When we pass on into the region of the elements, it is a hard task to discern any presence of evil, and when we stand in the boundless, untroubled clearness of Space-Being, such a conception is the infinitely impossible.

But this untroubled clearness of Being is exactly the consciousness which man has of his own being, in its ultimate and absolute expression, and, consequently, all possibility of judging the "I" as evil, or of having a consciousness of sin, vanishes. *His "soul" is*

transfigured above the sphere of judgment in him where sin is created and formulated, and "counts" in his practical movements. And this is transfiguration in that "soul's" own native light.

103. Why Mankind has striven to realise Sinlessness.

Now beyond all question, it is towards this consciousness of untroubled, and presumably unattainable purity of being, that all mankind throughout the past ages has been struggling. It is to bring about some assurance of it that all atonement-systems for sin and wrong have been developed in human religions. The fixed consciousness of his space-being, protesting against the imputation of sin, compels man to do so. And it is because he has never permitted his space-consciousness to have the supreme value for himself above that of his thought-forming power, that all such atonement-systems have proved abortive and vain. He has asserted his formulated *conceptive* Thought to be the highest governing sovereignty within him. Hence, all that he has been able to accomplish is to set the atonement-value (which has a purely arbitrary goodness attached to it) against his estimate of sin, and then make-believe that the former so purified the latter as to create for him a sense of untroubled clearness of spirit, equal to his ultimate *consciousness* of Space-being! But this is *never* done. Even when it seems to bring a sense of purity to the individual soul, it never decreates the belief of sin and evil as *permanences* of the

Universe. Heaven for the good, and Hell for the evil remain "forever"!

Now we should make it quite clear that Jesus regarded Sin as having no higher reference than to Himself, as Son of Man. We should also perhaps show that He referred all truth only to his consciousness of Himself as the sole infallible test of Truth, or as being sinless and Himself truth.

104. Jesus as Creator and Decreator of Sin in Man.

Sin, to be perfectly relative to Man, must begin and end with Man. But, in that case, Jesus being confessed a man, and affirming Himself to be even a Son of Man, must Himself be included within the sphere where Sin is possible. And in this respect we must acknowledge the fact that He assumes Himself to be That which Sin refers itself to in its *creation*, as well as That which Sin refers itself to in its *decreation*; or, that He is necessary for the existence of Sin as well as for its absolute negation. This fact is stated by Himself in the words:—"If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin." "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin" (John xv. 22, 24).

By His speech and works He created such a perfect and hitherto unknown standard of pure sinless life, as made it sinful to man to live otherwise. Just as without light there could be no shadow, so without Jesus there could be no sin. *He*

makes Himself the only Law by which Sin is created in disobedience to it. All preceding Laws or standards of perfect human life were imperfect. Sin had been referred to certain laws, which no human being professed perfectly to have obeyed. But it was an absolute fact that, before Jesus, no *perfect* standard of human life had existed in human form. And in order to be a true law of perfect life for Mankind, the *law* must necessarily be itself a human *life.* Hence the force of His command, "Follow ME." Hence, also, the relevancy of the command out of the Cloud, "Hear *Him*"; and also of the statement that the Holy Spirit would convict the world "of sin, because they believe not on ME (Jesus)." That is to say, Jesus is the supreme criterion of all sin. And we have seen how sin is decreated by reference to the "I AM" consciousness of Jesus; men thus dying sinless when they realise the same consciousness.

105. "A Son of Man" can alone judge Sin.

And we must face the fact that, before Jesus, all standards of human perfect life were formulated *notions* of the human mind; brain-begotten entities; themselves utterly imperfect, and doomed to be removed as falsities. *They were never lived by man, and they stood condemned in that they compelled men to live according to a standard which never had existed except in idea, and as carved upon stones.* Jesus, being first conscious of Himself as sinless, urged the world to become as He was. And as this was His

position with regard to man's sin, so he consistently placed Himself as the only Judge of Sin in the Last Judgment (Matt. xxv. 31-46). *Neither the "Father," nor the "Spirit" nor "God" are present in that Final Judgment as Judge of sin in man. And apparently for the reason that neither of these personal conceptions come within the relativity of humanity.* Jesus seems to deny such relativity even to the "Father," when He said the Father was neither of "flesh" nor "blood" (Matt. xvi. 17). But Jesus assumes that a human Judge is necessary, for the Father gave Him his authority to execute judgment *because* he was a (the) *Son of Man* (John v. 27).

106. Jesus transfigures the Human Mind in His Life and Teaching.

Jesus, therefore, instead of insisting, as did all the prophets and seers before Him, on the *absolute defilement of What-we-are, affirmed, on the contrary, the sinlessness of man to rest on the same foundational testimony as the sinlessness of absolute Nature.* And *this* is Space. And he took the human child as the representative form of it. He placed this consciousness of the child's being on the same basis as His own being, and that of Him who sent him. "Whosoever shall receive this little *child* in My name receiveth *Me*. . . . and . . . receiveth Him that sent Me." A truth which He extended to His disciples. "He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me." The consciousness of Himself, His "I AM," alone confirms

this view of *identity of being*. He abolishes absolute truth from all such conceptions as the Father, the Son, the Disciples, the Child, against the world's affirmation of their being separated, unique individuals. And He carried the consciousness of such "beings" far beyond even identity, or *One*-ness, to undivided whole-being, wherein He discerned the "I" to be before Abraham's day and before even the world was. That is to say, *He transfigured in His teaching the dark conceptions of the human brain; the formulations of human judgment; and not only swept away forever the age-long idea of Evil and Sin, as referable to Eternal Being, but laid the axe to the root of all human imaginings as to the limitations of Human Personality; absolute relativeness of man to man; man to the universe; and of man to his "God." In His own transfiguration all else in the human realm became transfigured.* But it is the melancholy truth that man prefers still to cling to the "Nothing" value which is nevertheless the Eternal Whole of which our "soul" is but a symptom.

107. Sin as more sinful by being restricted to Earth and Relativity.

It will doubtless be said here that we empty sin of all its gravity and seriousness in thus confining it to the sphere of human relationship. For, against the example of Jesus, the human heart finds a strange pleasure, consistently following the old prophets, in making sin the chief burden of its message to men. We the rather anticipate, by the

restriction of sin's area to the earth, an augmentation of guiltiness to all deeds of evil done by man against man, as compared with evil done by man against "God." By restricting we intensify. Jesus, by giving the highest value, forbade man to give less than an absolute condemnation to any sin committed against man. And it is the force of the Christian religion which is steadily increasing the value of man in the eyes of men as the world advances. It is this increase of loathing for sin done against man by men that is intensifying the hatred of war, and creating the thousand and one methods of ameliorating the evils prevalent in society; breaking down all artificial boundaries which have been reared by men between men and men, and men and women, nation and nation, race and race; and thus, by bringing down to earth the heavenly and the divine, and centralising these qualities in man as well as in "God," after the example of Jesus, to make it not only impossible to undervalue an injury done against man but to make it doubly sinful to do so. As a matter of common experience, sin is never done of set purpose against "God." We do the wrong against our fellow before an after-reflection asserts that we have sinned against "God"; and, primarily, sin is first a conviction of sin against man before it is sin against "God"; and the latter may be largely due to traditional teaching through parents and exoteric influences.

108. Jesus shrinks from Associating Man's Sin with God, even when conceived as a Father.

Jesus seemed loath to connect sin with the person of God, even when considered as a "Father." As if He held an unexpressed consciousness that Being, so Absolute and Supreme, could never be sinned against at all; as if He were never so detached from anyone or anything as to give them room to turn round and disobey Him. For He was *in* all, *through* all, and *the* all. And as this is the case with our consciousness of space as with "God," it seems as impossible to find any sin-sense in "God" as in space. The thought of sin and the thought of "*Spirit*" have no common meeting-place; because in the last vision of being, *spirit is what-we-are;* that is, space-being, sinless being.

In His teaching, therefore, we find Jesus placing the forgiveness of sin as a matter wholly within the relation of Himself to man, and between man and man. He never charges anyone with sin, except in as far as they refuse to believe in *Himself.* He never asks absolute being; God-Spirit; to forgive sins. It is very doubtful if He ever asked the "Father," which was His highest conception of *related* personality, to forgive sin. For, "Father, forgive them," said as from the Cross, is questionable; and the "debts" of the Lord's Prayer do not attain to the nature of sin. Such passages as—"The Father judgeth no man," "God sent not His son into the world to condemn (or judge) the world," "He hath committed all judgment unto the Son,"

"All power in heaven and on earth hath been given unto me," and similar others, point directly to a great consciousness in Him that forgiveness or non-forgiveness of sins lay entirely within the hand of Man, and, ultimately, that of the Son of Man. His teaching always assumes that "God" sees Mankind as the heart of man sees "God," *i.e.* pure as space is pure (Matt. v. 8).

And it seems for this reason that, as said above, He gave no charge to His Church on His departure from the human realm to condemn men, or to charge men with sin. He sent His Church to preach the Gospel, the truth that is always gladdening and saving. He *breathed* upon His Church as He sent them forth. And the significance of such breathing appears clearly to imply that on the part of both "Father" and "Son," all sin was ignored so completely as to find no place in their thought and message to men. He left it solely as a question between the Church and men, and not between man and God.

109. Absolute Forgiveness is sustained in our I Am Consciousness.

A position which is exhaustive of His teaching to Peter, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Until seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times, but, Until seventy times seven." This is absolute forgiveness, if it is anything. And the "I"-consciousness is certainly the basis of its absoluteness. Jesus did not ask Peter to do what

God had not done, or He Himself did not do. But it undoubtedly declares that *man* forgives the sins of *man;* not God.

110. Freedom is an "Absolute" without Relativity.

We also think that if the Christian Church had followed "Jesus only," as the Three did on the Mount, she would have had another form of *Freedom* to state to the world than her philosophical members have laboured to formulate in the past.

Man has often been likened to a bird in a cage, which has perfect freedom to fly at will, but only within the limits of its captivity. Man is viewed as free within the bounds of Nature, but incapable of any freedom beyond the bars of Nature, which he denominates her fixed "Laws." And "Nature," as quoted in § 73, is always conceived as "that which we observe in perception through the senses." And this "Nature" is supposed to be a fixed quantity; under closed, unalterable limits; bound under necessary forces which she must obey, and does obey without having will to choose otherwise. All is driven by necessity. And man's freedom is confined to the narrow margins of this system! Space is never taken into account as having anything to do with this "Nature"!

But clearly, without Space, as *Being*, Nature could have no existence, and it is the omission of our consciousness of Space, as fundamental for Nature, which beclouds all our conceptions of freedom. For it is this *consciousness* of Space, *as fundamental*

for our own Being, which enables us to possess a reasonable *judgment* of *absolute* freedom for ourselves. The fact always remains with us that *our consciousness testifies to absolute freedom as bound up with What-we-are.*

And it is *absolute*, not relative Freedom, which is in the mind of Jesus when He says (John viii. 32), "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

He uses the word "Truth" in an unlimited sense. It is not merely truth about certain doctrines, tenets, circumstances, or any particular argument which the Jews have employed against Him. It is wide-open Truth, Being, Reality. Let men but know this absolute Truth, and absolute Freedom must be their experience, as absolute as space.

And in this way we realise that our freedom is a far wider thing than the limited "Nature" which has been conceived as "closed" and under the hydraulic pressure of necessity. Our consciousness gives us always an assurance of *absolute* freedom, and it does so, it is clear, because of the nature of our being. But to know this Truth we must rid ourselves of the encumbering ideas of so-called Natural and Moral systems which have been created and made in men's minds. These are impermanencies, and fluctuate from age to age, and, being based in relativity, have no claim to being absolutely true. The Truth which Jesus calls us to *know*, in order that we may be absolutely free, is the Truth which He equates with His "I AM" and ours; and *within* this conscious

knowledge we have no hint of the slightest limitation. The "Son" makes us free indeed by directing us to this highest of all truths.

The struggle towards this "I AM" freedom, as a successful undertaking, began with Jesus. The ancient philosophers and seers had strong intimations of it, and saw that to "know Self" was the right path to follow. But the efforts of the ancient Indian and Greek thinkers to find a concrete "Self" to know, never matured, and they only drifted about in the hazy regions of speculative abstractions. All modern theological and philosophical inquiries as to the concrete "Self" have failed in a similar manner. Jesus alone has proved Himself to know what was in man. He alone has led man to that absolute concrete Reality, "I AM," and revealed it as "the Truth," which gives absolute freedom from every mystery. Space, as synonym for "Nature," reveals a freedom equal to the freedom which we impute to "God," and it is this same consciousness which insists within us, through all the limitations which we experience in Thought and Sensation, or in Mind and Body; and it exists in constant protest against every element of "necessity" dominating our physical and moral systems. There is an *equality* of Being given us in our consciousness of absolute being, and this, and absolute *freedom*, are present with us because of both resting upon the consciousness of our being Space.

111. Freedom never sought for "Beyond" Space.

This fact receives strong support in the absence of all desire in man for Freedom beyond this space-consciousness. The space-consciousness is absolute satisfaction. We never crave freedom beyond Space. It is because, being ourselves Space, the absolute fulness of our being is realised, and all further *prayer* ceases. The "Space" which we call "eternity," and as different from the Space of our consciousness, is a pure fancy. The "Voice," the Cloud and the "spirits" of Moses and Elijah, were *at home in the Space which held Jesus and His Three Disciples. The same Space-Being was equally a consciousness and Reality to everyone there.* It was all the "eternity" they knew.

This question of Freedom must have been often in the thoughts of Jesus. He was always conscious of being straitened until His work was accomplished. And since His time, Christianity has never been devoid of this same straitening. To Himself, His task was opposed on every hand. Moses drawing water from the desert-rock was a feeble parallel. To convert the Jewish soul will likely be the final work of the spirit of God in this world. Jesus seems now and then to have despaired in the effort. As the stone upon the blade of grass, He saw the closed Mosaic system of "the Law and Prophets" lie like a tombstone upon the hearts and lives of His disciples. Its power, in His generation, was all but overwhelming against Him. To the day of His crucifixion it

controlled the minds of His followers, far more potently than His own doctrines. Nothing but the passions of affection and love for His person held them to His side. Not His wonderful works and signs, not His speaking as never man spake, would have proved strong enough to make them forsake all and follow Him. And, perhaps, but for the deep drawing power of His death, even their love for Him might also have perished. Certainly, in the Transfiguration there is nothing to encourage us to believe that the disciples placed Him above Moses and Elijah in their devotion. The offer to build tabernacles *equally* for all Three seems to hint only at a common status in their faith. Perhaps it was to dissolve this equality of homage that prompted the Voice to command, "Hear *Him*," without any reference to Moses and Elijah. And with this fact in His mind, and finding it impossible to make way against the Mosaic system of religion so ingrained in His followers, it is easy to conjecture that Jesus had prayed for the presence of the Two great representatives of Israel by His side, and to be made visible to those who trusted Him most, in order that a heavenly confirmation of His high mission to the world might be given them, and a divine testimony to His Sonship, as contrasted with the servitude of these Leaders. His praying ceased when the vision became manifest, as if His desire had been granted.

112. Christ's "Risks" in being Baptized and Transfigured.

But just as Jesus, in being baptized by John's baptism, took great risks in suggesting to the people that He required washing from sins, so in meeting Moses and Elijah on the Mount, He courted the danger of His disciples assuming that He needed instruction and inspiration from the heaven-placed Moses and Elijah. Such a belief as this, if it once had got a hold of the Christian world, would have engendered untold injury to the building up, in the future, of His Universal Church.

Happily, this hazard was rendered impossible by what they heard and saw. Moses and Elijah had no other interest than in the "exodus" of Jesus. They were the first to see "no man, save Jesus only." By them the disciples appear to have been completely ignored. Certainly, they had no heaven-sent message for either Jesus or them. They did, indeed, confirm the age-long surmise of all the devout, that the dead *are* concerned about the affairs of the living. But their departure must have left the disciples very doubtful as to their supremacy as leaders and authorities in the moral and spiritual guidance of mankind. The Voice, as of a Father, speaking out of the cloud, declared their deposition from this high place, and it may be that this conviction remained with them afterwards. "This is my Son, my Beloved: hear *Him*," was a deliverance which put Jesus first and Moses and Elijah nowhere; and

that Jesus should stand in this great freedom was all-important for the future progress of the Christian Faith. For it settled forever the relative positions of the Hebrew and Christian Religions. The veil which fell over the vision, the silence which engulfed their names, and the darkness which hid their persons so that the Three Apostles saw no one, save Jesus only, marked the utter fall of the religion of the Old Wilderness.

CHAPTER XII.

113. "Jesus Only."

"JESUS only." How pregnant are the suggestions which these words create! Had they been cherished and acted upon by all the members of the Church of Christ on the earth, in genuine, undivided allegiance, what changes would have fallen to be recorded in her long history! What spiritual and transfiguring reforms might yet arise if "Jesus only" were to be made the sole centre of faith and vision among His followers! Instead, the Church has to entertain a melancholy conviction that Christendom, from the first, has never given to her Lord and Master her sole and undivided loyalty. She has clung to "Moses and the Prophets," as being as essentially "God's Word" as that "*Word*" which was revealed in Jesus. Peter's dilemma as to an equal and permanent residence for the Three still weighs upon the decisions of the Church. The Church still sees Moses, Elijah, and Jesus *together*, undifferentiated; His death at Jerusalem is still first in her interest, and in her Creeds and external Symbols, as being essential to the forgiveness of Sin and the imperatives of stone-recorded Law. This "Vision" of the past centuries is not yet dim or darkened. It is still

retained on the retina of the eyes of the professedly faithful, although actually hollow and spectral; "the Truth" that was Moses and Elijah being gone for ever.

We believe that the Church must yield to Jesus the absolute freedom He claimed, and, by His truth, conferred upon the world. Not only Moses and all the Prophets must pass from her vision, but Paul and *his* prophets, Augustine, Anselm, Calvin, and the Popes. All other obstructing systems likewise, named of Philosophy and Science, past or present, must similarly be founded in His Truth. His "I AM" Truth ought to be the Alpha and Omega of all physical, mental, and moral teaching. It were a consummation devoutly to be wished. But is it not yet true that, so far from the Church acknowledging Him to be *absolutely* "the Light of the World," she timidly acquiesces in the limiting of His light to a very small area of Human Knowledge; preferring the "light" of some philosophical Moses, and the assertions of the scientific Elijahs, that Jesus is not to be found in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire? "We are so little accustomed to look for philosophy in the New Testament," said Professor Max-Müller, "that we have almost acquiesced in that most unholy divorce between Religion and Philosophy." And the same might be said regarding Science and Religion. Yet perhaps the most hopeful sign of our time is the slowly advancing shadow which is falling upon all other teaching than His, which is to be deemed *final* teaching, and which gives the promise of that total eclipse that enshrouded

Moses and Elijah from human sight, and which is about to withdraw absolutely all other objects of "light" from the wavering devotions of men, leaving thereby, in undisputed pre-eminence of Reality, "*Jesus only*." For "no other Name is given under heaven and among men." "All Power is given unto Me in heaven and earth." "He that loveth father or mother more than Me, cannot be my disciple." "All that came before Me are thieves and robbers."

114. Heaven.

The Transfiguration of Jesus has also important light to shed on the "Heaven" of human dreams and longings. For, clearly, here if anywhere, Beatitude of the best is realised. The simple truth is, that it was "good" to be there. The ideal hope of all ages stood robed in human form and loveliness. All the best elements of heaven and earth were gathered into one glorious society. The Father, the Son, the greatest of the Earth-Children of the Father, past and present; Light inexpressible and full of glory; and the all-pervading atmosphere of Love. And it is completely brought within the powers of the human mind and consciousness as an attainable experience. Hence Peter's prayer, "Let us make here three tabernacles" . . . etc. Long gazing upon this scene we see how stale and tawdry, by comparison, seem the "heavens" and "paradises" of the East and the West. The "Nirvana" of the East, the "Paradise" of Mohammed, the "Valhalla" of the Scandinavians, the "Abraham's Bosom" of the Jews, the "Elysium" of the Greeks, Dante's Paradise

of the Middle Ages, Milton's Paradise of Modern Times, together with many other creations of the poets and philosophers;—all these condensed fantasies ascending forever from the ecstatic heart of mankind, and transfigured for all time in this representative vision. "My beloved Son!" The heavens and the earth embrace in love. Good news! From the impermanent cloud, Permanent Being builds permanent Law upon permanent Love. "Hear *Him*." All that human heart has ever craved will be found in Him. From of old, Eternal Being has been represented as wrapt in cloud and darkness in order that He might cleave space and the fearful heart with thunderbolts and the resounding Voice of Law. Space was also held as the horrible gorgon, the terrible barrier that divided Him from His earth and children! He loathed both because of their sinfulness. Yet how pathetic! Men agonised for His presence even under such conditions. Therefore they built towers and set up ladders in order to reach His dwelling, and shed rivers of blood to soften His sympathies for them; and, being denied, roasted their cattle that the smoke might at least ascend to Him, as a sweet smelling savour to please Him. Law they conceived, and Eternal power, as above and throughout Space, but not Love! Love was alone on the sin-cursed earth! How sad is such a picture.

In the Transfiguration, the Cloud no longer conceals but reveals the passion of the Loving Being who is All-Space, inclusive of the heavens and the earth; and who has never been divided from earth

or His children for a moment throughout the rolling ages of developing Time. This surely is the everlasting Gospel: Truth which gladdens all, in all ages to come. And this light springs from "Jesus only."

115. Priesthood abolished in the Transfiguration.

The conception of Priesthood, also, as men have persistently taught it to their fellows, down even to our own day, is likewise swept away by this word of transfiguring truth. *The Voice speaks directly to Peter and his friends without the intervening medium of Jesus.* Which corroborates Christ's own teaching that He is the Door by which men enter to the Father, but that He does not mediate between the Father and Men when they stand in His presence. *What* man *is*, is indivisible from Eternal Being. Even Jesus does not venture to come between them. He knew this indeed to be impossible from the nature of Being as taught by Himself. "I in them and Thou in Me," treats not of separate individuals but of indivisible Being. Therefore, when Peter impulsively asks permission to build three tabernacles, although the request is put to Jesus, *He is silent*, and the Voice, which alone answers prayer, replies to Peter. Hence Jesus asks us to pray *in His name*, that is, in His spirit and character, but not "for His sake." Jesus Himself prayed to the Father *as a Child;* and this position is sufficient for all men. The Father hears and answers every *child.* But He hears no *priest*—a name and office which Jesus consistently abhorred.

Let us then dissociate the idea of a priest from the

offering of prayer. He was not in the beginning of things. He came as the result of the belief in God as a Terror and a Fear, when men shrunk from uttering His name lest He should appear to them. The priesthood was also further strengthened by man's consciousness of sin, and unworthiness to approach God in any wise. Priesthood is due to misconception of the loving nature and character of Eternal Being, and of His "relations" to even the worst of His creatures. When we believe that "God is Love," the troubled heart is drawn instinctively to Him, even when, like Jesus, we climb mountains to get silence and peace deep and pure enough in which to utter His name.

116. The Cloud spoke in Answer to Prayer.

The "Voice" was really the answer of God to Peter's prayer. As we have said, Peter spoke directly to Jesus, but the "Voice" out of the cloud answered Him. And it is remarkable that there was no cloud until Peter spoke.

> "That awful Power rose from the mind's abyss,
> Like an unfathomed vapour that enwraps,
> At once, some lonely traveller."
>
> WORDSWORTH.

After he spoke to Jesus, the cloud moved forward and enveloped the Three Apostles.

It is significant of much. "*While he was yet speaking*, a *bright* cloud overshadowed them." "*And while he said these things*, there came a cloud." Out of the brilliant glory that shone from Jesus around them, a cloud issued which spoke. A fact which

is suggestive. For the grand truth seems to be emphasised that God is so near to all His children that He hears their words to each other, even as if they were His own, murmured in soliloquy. While we are yet speaking He answers. "If the Abysm," says Shelley, "could vomit forth its secrets. But a voice is wanting, the deep truth is imageless." Yet, just because it is the Abysm, Space-Being, it holds all voices and all silences within its "I Am" Being, even as man does; his resounding literatures, religions, philosophies, rising and falling in the great immensity of it. From such limitless, formless Being, a voice comes forth intelligible to man, and because human consciousness of its message and import is nearest to that of a father's ("My Son"), human thought conceives the origin of the Voice to have a Father's Being.

But *all* our prayers on the relative plane of life are answered through the intermediacy of cloud. It is a veritable experience that none of our prayers is answered by One, whom face to face, we realise to be "God." Answer is actually spoken through the cloud which at all times surrounds us, viz., the dim, the fleeting, the impersonal, the inanimate, the world, the non-human. And to us, as to Peter, the answer that reaches us seems wholly disconnected from the Object to whom we have prayed. We pray to the Living Jesus, and the inanimate Cloud replies. The Cloud sprang into being in order to answer. It was most suited to the cloud in Peter's mind even as it is to our own. "For he wist not what to answer." "Not knowing what he said."

117. Prayer always Transfigures.

Now if we remember that the entire Transfiguration followed upon Jesus' prayer, the true object for which he had ascended the mountain, "and *as* He was praying" (Luke ix. 28), we shall seem right in inferring that *prayer always transfigures the praying soul in some degree* (Luke iii. 21-22), and that this wonderful communion brings new revealing light and expressed truth, and a confirmed direction and commandment *to hear Jesus.* The answer seemed wide of Peter's request to build three tabernacles, but when God has spoken to the soul, in any shape or token, He has answered our prayer. *His having heard and made known His presence to us, is to have answered our prayer to the full.* Having Him we have all. And if we see no connection between our request and the answer, it is because of the foolishness of our thoughts and words, not really knowing what we say. God hears our *wants* cry, not merely our voice. Moreover, if God answers Jesus by the brilliance of voiceless light, and Peter by the mouth of the shadowing mist, the difference may be only due to the faith and fitness of the one who prays. There can be little doubt that in the case of Jesus, "in such access of mind, in such hour of visitation from the living God," He entered into that communion that transcends "the imperfect offices of praise and prayer," and became transfigured above the helpfulness of either thought or word. It was totally different with Peter, whose soul was a dark, confused, moral chaos. The clouded theophany was

essential to the clouded condition of his spirit, just as the clouded presence of God in the humanity of Jesus was essential to the darkened mind of the world.

118. Man's futile Desire to Stay the Vision.

Undoubtedly, there is much in Peter's state of mind with which we are bound to sympathise. The True, the Beautiful, and the Good were wonderfully disclosed to his startled vision, and, for the time, sense and understanding were quenched in their splendours. In such circumstances, there is no further desire beyond resting in the happy present, with its charming freshness and possession. Nothing is more characteristic of man. He rejoices in the new spectacle, the new idea flashing suddenly upon his imagination, and folds it as passionately to his inmost soul as the new child is folded to the mother's bosom. The new discovery always brings with it the happiness of a new creation. And every power of mind and spirit are bent to the utmost to conserve and retain it. Tabernacles are built that it may abide forever!

It is the same with every institution, custom, and human endeavour in our earthly existence which is built upon such discovery. Men fondly make tents of systematised thought, explain such systems by "laws," fix the wonderful idea down by logical devices, mathematical pegs, philosophical categories, and make-believe in its eternal permanence! Not knowing what they say and do! For the vision cannot stay. There is still higher transfiguration

than the Peters have yet beheld. The all-enveloping darkness closes down upon the "cloud-clapped towers," the "unsubstantial pageant" fades, and there is left Jesus only to make "exodus" with us through the "little life," and the sleep.

119. The Two Trinities.

But when we turn from the Three who are enveloped in the cloud to the Three who are shining in light above the brightness of the sun, we confess to some astonishment when we hear their conversation to be centred in the subject of Death! "They spake of the exodus which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." If sin was impossible in this scene, why should death be the chief interest? Did death then really come by sin? Was Paul right in saying so?

We venture to think the true teaching of Jesus on death has been sadly misinterpreted in the Christian Church. The Apostles took over from the Old Testament and from the accumulated dread of the human race the conception of death as *an Evil.* It was the one awful blot and curse upon the creatures of God. To Paul it was "the Last Enemy"! To abolish it was, to him, the high cause of Christ's coming into this world. It was the chief end of His work!

Therefore, the human imagination has created the Trinity of Evil as Sin, Death, and Hell, before the Trinity of Good as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; the Devilhood before the Godhood. And to both Jews and Christians, the grand work of the Holy

Trinity throughout time has been the subjugation of the Trinity of Evil! And the instruments of the Temple and the Church have been held to fulfil their highest purpose in symbolising the Sacrifice of Blood which accomplished this work! Is not the teaching of Jesus utterly opposed to such conceptions? His "exodus" at Jerusalem could not be, in His mind, the equivalent of our "death." In actual fact, He cancelled the word "death" by the term "sleep," as more truthful.

120. The Mind of Jesus concerning "Life" and "Death."

To Jesus, our "Life" and "Death" are not *ultimates*. He represents Himself as putting on both life and death as garments, and again laying them aside. He, in what He *is*, is above and independent of both. As human mentality has grappled with "Life" and "Death," Christ has no cognisance of them. On every occasion he rebukes human grief over death. And He will have no tears shed over His own horrible "exodus." "Weep not for me," He commands the daughters of Jerusalem. "Why weepest thou?" He asks Mary Magdalene, in His surprise. Life, for Christ, had quite another meaning than has been given to it in either synagogue or ecclesia. In the mind of Jesus there is a conception of Being which does not include our "life" and "death" within its compass. And there is only one consciousness we possess which gives us the same Being which is wholly free of such. It is the consciousness of

Space-Being. We are in full experience, every moment of our existence, with Being which is absolutely free of any possible "life" or "death," as mortals conceive these. We cannot, by any power of thought, conceive of Space-Being as either "living" or "dying." And we require this consciousness to enable us to realise the ultimate attitude of Christ's mind in viewing "life" and "death." *He did not hold them as having reference to absolute Being.* They were simply brain-begotten "ideas" in men's thought concerning Undivided Being.

In the mind of Jesus, living and dying are as waves that rise and fall on a boundless ocean which is not to be measured by them. Such "relativities" pass away in the judgments that create them, yet He *Is.* Heaven and earth pass away, or all relativity, absolutely, yet He abides. It is this conception of Being which enables us to grasp the fact as true, and quite naturally true, *that He, in His mortality, was in the same plane of being as the Father, and Moses, and Elijah.* He himself, as alive, together with the Three Apostles alive, were in the identical plane of existence with those who were "dead." Christ, that is, in His Transfiguration, proved that our common conceptions of Life and Death are inadequate to the fulness of His truth of Being. He passed into the highest glory and into the presence of Eternal Being without "dying" or laying aside His mortal body. And if we would likewise understand ourselves, in that "I AM" light which is as much ours as His,

we must accept His assumptions that what-we-are is Being absolutely clean and free from all such restrictive notions. And if we can see in *Space* this Spirit-God-Being, and remember that we are never separated or separable from Space-Being, we shall easily place ourselves in the consciousness of Jesus as absolutely above the "life" and "death" of the world's convictions. For it is only on this foundation of consciousness that we can realise, as Herbert Spencer realised, our Being "without Origin or Cause," which "has ever existed and must ever exist," and so verify that consciousness which declared Himself "before Abraham's day"; "before the foundation of the world"; "I AM" Being whose idiom can only be, for us, Space-Being; the identical Being which we ourselves are conscious we are. We might then find it more consonant to our ultimate desires to realise the history of mankind not as "living" and "dying" under the frown of an offended Creator, but as simply, as Jesus said, "coming *from* the Father and going *to* the Father." We could then "enter into the joy of our Lord" in real earnest.

121. How Jesus "laid aside His Glory."

What must have been of startling concern to Moses and Elijah was Christ's deliberately leaving such glorious light and golden Being, while, at the same time, having the knowledge, which was also theirs, of His "exodus" from Jerusalem. This deliberate choice to descend once more to the

dying levels of mortal creatures, to put on suffering and death, must have been a revelation to them. This is the only occasion, however, on which Christ may be said truly to have "laid aside His glory" and abandoned heaven for earth of His own clear will. For Paul's defective notions of Christ's "emptying Himself" at His birth, taking upon Himself the "form of a servant," and humbling Himself by becoming obedient unto "death," as if He had done a degrading thing by being Man, must not come between us and Christ's own estimate of His own mortal existence. *Nowhere does Jesus even hint that to be a man is to descend below the level of Deity.* He will not have it. To receive the *Child* or the *Disciple* is to receive the *Father* who sent him. The Father and Man are one. The "humiliation of death" is a world-old theological invention. It was the express aim of Jesus, in all His teaching, to wipe out all such wretched conceptions regarding the inferior and immoral status of Man. For He delights and deliberately prefers to be called "Man." His birth was not "emptying Himself," nor was His "being a servant" a coming beneath His imperial dignity, nor His being obedient to death an acceptance of inferiority or disgrace in any shape or form. On the contrary, this is the great God-way of His Being. Moses and Elijah must have felt how inferior they were beside Him in His preference for such "exodus." To "live" and "to die," as all mortals experience them, is to enter more and more into the fulness of the experience of Eternal

Being. The glorious manifestation of the Universe, in all its complex and ceaseless changes, is not less nor else than a manifestation of its "living" and "dying"; the appearance and disappearance, to and from our eyes, of Eternal "God." His and our Being are not separated (though we speak in divisive language), and thus He "lives" and "dies" just as all do. He does so, because without His doing so, no others could "live" and "die." He "lays down his life" always in and for others. In the life-powers of the earth, the plant, the animal, the parent, God-Life is "laid down." And He "lays it down to take it again." It was in this same consciousness that Jesus understood his "power of laying down His life and taking it again," for it was the commandment He had received from "the Father" (John viii. 18). It is the "commandment" that all existences receive in birth. And "Sin," "Hell," and "Death," as men think them, were abolished in this teaching, because they were mind-made conceptions of erring man, and were sooner or later doomed to extinction in the full "light of the World." "Relativities" no doubt they have ever been as between man and man, and as such they are likely to remain long in the affairs of mankind. But as eternal correspondences between Eternal Being and man; deflecting the purpose and actions of that Being towards man; and rupturing the harmony of the universe, they cannot now be maintained to be.

122. The Transfiguration of Jesus which was Unknown to Moses and Elijah.

The Two Men who stood beside Jesus in His transfigured effulgence must have been conscious of a far higher glory in Him than that in which they now shared with Him. They had not laid down their lives for men, nor revealed the "Father" to them, nor loved them as the "Father" had loved them. They had not obtained the glory of the fulness of the sacrifice of self for the other. They had known the glory of Law, and the glory of the vision of prophecy, but not the glory of the "Father." This was the supreme realisation of the Son in giving Himself for those the "Father" loved. Not indeed merely to satisfy the "Father" for human sins, and to justify Moses's Laws, but to reveal the "Father" in and to men, and the love wherewith He had so loved the world. *The world could then know that there was no consciousness of its guilt in the Father's mind*, and that, as Jesus said, "The Father judgeth no man."

This is indeed Christ's peculiar glory, that not even the foul abasement of the cross could crush in Him the testimony to the "Father's" love for the world. It was glory that surpassed the glory of the Transfiguration, of the resurrection, or even of incarnation, for it was glory that rose above the values of Life and Death, and all they mean to mankind, being the same glory of the Father's self-sacrifice in giving Himself in His universe and children, and which Christ, and all begotten, had *with* the Father before the world was.

From this standpoint, therefore, we are able to infer that, in the everlasting conception of Being, if it had been possible to give man higher blessing by an avoidance of all death, in some such way as is figured in this world, there would have been no death in the world. It seems to be one of the great truths taught by the Transfiguration alone, that death is really the *best* way by which all that die can attain to the supreme fulfilment or glory of *Being*. Christ seems to indicate this, when having through prayer obtained *transfigurement of life* in glory, He yet preferred in calm, deliberate choice, the higher *transfigurement and glory of death*. He followed the great way and will of the "Father."

123. The Transfiguration is also the Highest Communion, and unites the Ideals of the *Church* of God and the *Kingdom* of God.

Finally, we note that this is the first time that "God" is represented in true Sociality, as a "Father" among His children. To Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and the Prophets, God appeared to each *alone*. He was to them the solitary, isolated God, similar to the *electron* of Science, and the personalised *Unity* of Philosophy. Hence He was alone to the High Priest in the Temple "Holy of Holies": a tradition which the Jews unfortunately have built up into their *national* isolation from all others. The Hebrews have never known their "God" to be the Heart of an absolute Society of heaven and earth, such as we see typified by the Transfiguration.

But this *Unity-in-Communion* is a desire of man-

kind, deep as Space. In some way or other it has affected all historical development of the past, and is perhaps the most dominating cry of the world. It is the brightest light in the dreams of the poets; it is the despair of philosophers to rationalise as an ideal; and every religion in some measure maintains it. It will always revive the enthusiasm of the leaders of men, be their cause ever so dead and lost. But the *Unity-in-Communion*, the perfect Society, is already given to man in Christ's Transfiguration. It is also the ideal Church, and the ideal Kingdom fused in one. *There can be no higher conceivable form of Communion.* And what Christendom aims now to do is to lead all men within its influence until the world itself shall stand upon this "mountain," and all humanity be wholly transfigured with Christ; and with Him ascend, not only to his Father and our Father, that ultimate Unity-in-Communion, but also to His God and our God, above all unities of limited Thought and imaginative vision, and that not indeed for one brief experience, but everlastingly.